DALE FOLK

By DOROTHY UNA RATCLIFFE

Illustrated by

FRED LAWSON

TEN SHILLINGS AND SIXPENCE

DALE FOLK

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

SINGING RIVERS

DALE DRAMAS

THE SHOEING OF JERRY-GO-NIMBLE, AND OTHER DIALECT POEMS

DALE LYRICS

THE BODLEY HEAD

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JOE OTTIWELL

DALE FOLK

CHARACTER SKETCHES IN PROSE AND VERSE

BY

DOROTHY UNA RATCLIFFE

ILLUSTRATED BY FRED LAWSON

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NOTE

THE people in this book are called DALE FOLK, but if you wish to meet any of them, it is not necessary to travel to the Northern Dales.

You will find them anywhere so long as you really wish to meet them.

D. U. R.

I

JOE OTTIWELL, HUNTSMAN

JOE OTTIWELL, HUNTSMAN

WHEN the days closed in Joe Ottiwell was usually to be found playing dominoes in the kitchen of the "Dun Bull." There was a high-backed grandfather chair on the left side of the open range which was known as "Joe's Chair." On the left of the chair was an ingle-nook where he could place his evening paper and his glass as soon as a game began. A trestled oak table was placed in front of Joe's chair, not too far from the fire, but far enough to allow Mrs. Moyle, the hostess of the "Dun Bull," to open and close her ovens at will. It was an exceedingly well-kept range; you could see yourself reflected in the shining brass-work, and the bellows, toast-rack, brass pans, and copper kettles were a cheerful sight.

The floor was flagged, and usually the two hound puppies that Mrs. Moyle walked (out of friendliness for Joe, for she did "not hold wi' killin' owt for t' fun of it") lay in front of the fire, stretching, rolling, yawning, or sleeping, without interference from any one, when the shutters had been drawn and the curtains pulled across the bow windows.

On Saturday night Joe usually arrived before the other domino players and had a bit of supper with Mrs. Moyle.

When she heard her other visitors' heavy steps on the outside flags, Mrs. Moyle would tip the dominoes on to the trestled table and light a second lamp. The hound puppies would raise their heads, roll over lazily, as four or five dalesmen trooped in :

" Evenin', Mrs. Moyle."

" Evenin', Joe."

And, keeping on their hats, they would hang up their coats in a side passage, then take their places at the domino table.

Joe was by twenty years the oldest of the group, being eighty come next Candlemas Day. Being the retired huntsman of a pack of dale-head hounds he was looked up to by the others on all matters concerning sport, and the old man would have snubbed swiftly any one who was unwary enough to differ with him over the points of a good hound for hill-work or on the ways of hill-foxes.

He was tall and lean and stooped only slightly ; his thin legs were encased in neat leggings ; his breeches were of Bedford cord. In his stock—which he preferred to a collar and tie—was set a fox's golden head with topaz eyes, presented to him by hunt followers ; he wore a closely woven tweed coat ; his hair was a grizzled grey, thinning at the crown and above the temples ; his eyebrows were grey, too, and his eyes, hazel-grey, small and kind and shrewd. His nose was long and sharp, and his mouth snapped a little as it opened and shut. His rugged chin was scarred—the souvenir of a fall from some crags above Swaledale on one of

the many days when the varmint "White Tag" had beaten him.

Once play began there was no sound save the clink of the dominoes against each other. During play Joe did not encourage conversation, drinking, or smoking.

"A man cannot pit himself," he would say, "against an animal as fit as a fox if he drinks or smokes. Them huntsmen 'at lets theer horses do all t' hard work can afford to drink or smoke theer heads off if it pleases 'em, but not t' huntsmen or t' followers of a foot-pack. I knaw summat aboot both kinds of hunting. As a lad I wur second whipper-in to t' York and Ainsty, and it wur then I larned to blow t' different calls on t' horn. Hunting wiv a horse is a luxury, but hunting on foot wi' sich a main o' girt, cunnin' moor-foxes is a necessity, an' ye can't last a long day on these hills onless ye keep yersen as fit as a fox."

On Joe's right hand sat Bill Pennyman, the new huntsman; he had been trained by Joe as a whipper-in. He was a big, silent, gawky, red-faced lad, with but two ideas in his clumsy, flax-covered head—a passion for hounds and a loyal admiration for Joe Ottiwell.

"I'll niver have t' wunnerful days owd Joe has had. Who else save Joe cud put a fox up below Aysgarth, run past south end o' Semerwater, ower into Langstrothdale Chase, keep to his track, an' when t' full moon topped t' hills, kill him on Oughtershaw side? A forty mile run if it wur one!"

Joe was very fond of Bill Pennyman, in spite of all the snubbing he gave the lad if he expressed an opinion without being invited to do so, and Joe took great care that no one

should treat Bill to drinks, and he saw to it that Bill attended chapel once every Sunday, unless a hound needed nursing, and, even then, on many occasions Joe would look after the sick hound so that Bill did not miss chapel two Sundays running. Joe himself attended church. He had had a scrap with the Methodist minister over hounds attending services. Parson at St. Aidan's did not seem to notice that when Joe attended Matins he was accompanied by two old hounds, who would follow him up the aisle and lie down on the floor of the pew until the last hymn was sung, when they would stretch themselves and follow Joe quietly down the aisle and through the graveyard, home.

One evening, as the first game drew to a close, Kit Hemsworth, who had been watching intently one of the hound puppies, said, " Joe, I think Romper's got a canker in one ear ; he's been worriting all t' time we've been playin'."

" Bring him to me, Bill," said the old man ; then, as he handled the pup, he said, " By gow ! Romper, they would niver so much as let thee look at t' benches at Peterborough, but thoo'll be cannier in this coontry than them aristocratic Belvoir tans or drum-stick legged Middleton lot ! Whya ! t' swell packs wud be lamed after an hour's work on these moors. My hounds may not be much to look at, but none on 'em ever ran mute, an' I never had but one left-handed ; she wur a bitch named ' Hermione,' a lemon an' white bitch wiv a luvely head, an' I hadn't t' heart to part wiv her, because she came fra Blencathra coontry an' had some o' John Peel's blood in her. . . . Aye ! aye ! them Middleton

make o' hound is good enow fur a green grass promenade wi' lile thorn hedges to laik ower.

" ' Oh ! what beauties ', says t' ladies, but what wud they do up amang t' pot-holes o' t' Buttertubs ? Nay, handsome is as handsome does, an' it's niver truer than o' hounds " . . . and as he put the puppy down : " A lile drop o' warm oil in his reet ear fur a day or two, Mrs. Moyle. Doon, Romper, doon ! " as the young hound tried to get its forepaws on to his knee again.

Joe was a keen domino player, but once get him on to the subject of foxes and he would forget the game and everything else, and hold his hand, with the domino he intended playing, in mid air, until he had finished talking, when he would play it with extra deliberation.

Jem Holden mentioned stag-hunting. The newspaper-men were writing up an account of a hind who had gone to sea, and over which there had been a great outcry, and Jem began to compare a stag and a fox, to the detriment of the fox.

" Fox or stag," said Mrs. Moyle, from the table where she was ironing, " it's all the same ; fox or stag or hare, to my mind all huntin' is cruel, but happen stag-huntin' seems cruellest to t' newspaper folk acause of a stag lookin' sich a grand cratur."

Joe knew it was useless to argue with Mrs. Moyle. Once she crossed him when he was a young man and she was a young girl, when a hunted hare took refuge behind some boxes in her garden. She had thrown her shawl over it, taken it up in her arms, and openly defied Joe and the entire

field, Master and all, with a resolute, "Thoo shall not kill t' poor lile cratur," and she had let it go as soon as their backs were turned. No, it was useless answering Mrs. Moyle, so Joe ignored her remark and said quietly :

"I think nowt to t' stag-huntin', an' theer's no call to compare a stag an' a fox. A stag wud be a fine animal to hunt in a open coontry like England used to be in t' owden days. Then he had a sportin' chance o' gettin' well away—same chance as a fox has on these hills. Aye, I ken theer's folk 'at compare a fox wiv a stag to a fox's detryment ; but fur a' they say, a fox is a bonny, smart, limber-lookin' lile fellow, breet in colour, wiv a wick look o' his ain, fra' his clean-cut ears to his luvely brush, an' he's got no end of expression in his gowden eyes, fra' sheer cubbish mischief to real devilish cunning . . . an' in this wild country he has a grand sportin' chance ivery time. Even wiv a mounted field o' three hundred, wiv a hundred motor-cars an' crowds o' foot-people, even then he can get well away, tho' in course it stands to reason that a moorland fox has got more gumption than a ring-runnin' lowland one. . . .

"Last winter I wur stayin' wi' my daughter, one 'at married t' farmer chap aboon Ripon. Cubbin' had begun in that coontry—they start as soon as t' first yaller leaf shows on t' trees—so I took my lile grandson out to t' nearest covert to show him, likely, a fox. Hounds had been poppin' in an' out o' t' covert in a gaumless sort o' way for hard on an hour, when, ho ! straight across t' ride up which we wur lookin', lollops, as graceful as you please, a girt dog fox ;

as sure as my name is Joe Ottiwell that theer fox were a-laughin', aye ! a grinnin' hard, same as ye are, John Hallock, an' fur certain t' hounds wur a'most on top o' him. There wur a lile ditch on t' left side o' t' ride, an' if t' hounds had had theer muzzles up they must o' seen him turn an' jeer at 'em. T' foremost hound all but touched his brush, an' what did that Charlie varmint do ? As I am a Christian man, he lepped high in t' air, turned a complete somersault, an' landed in a patch o' bracken on t' other side o' t' owd thorn, an' then got under t' bracken fronds an' disappeared as wick as a shootin' star. Them girt, ower-fed hounds ran reet ower him—aye they ran reet ower him—*an'—missed—him* ! A few seconds later up rode t' Master.

" ' Wheer's my fox ? ' says he, an' I telled him what I'd seen.

" ' *My* hounds miss him ! ' says he, very pained-like, an' he got off his horse an' called t' hounds together an' brought 'em back to t' owd thorn wheer t' varmint had done his somersault. Sure enough, they hit t' line just below t' bracken patch, and they began feathering an' speakin' very prettily as they ran along t' ditch bottom ; but though they were nobbut a few seconds behind him and had been well-nigh on top o' him, that fox lived to run anuther—aye, many anuther day . . . an' fra' t' cunnin' of him, I wuddent be surprised if his sire wurn't a fell fox, fur all he'd been bred in a pheasant cover ! Aye, a young fox is a bonny cratur, an' a cub a few weeks old is as sweet a sight as ony one cud find onywheer in t' world."

At the end of the next game Joe told his listeners more about down-dale foxes. When he went down-dale to visit his married daughter she would generally find some pretext or other for taking the horse and trap out, especially if there were a Meet within reasonable distance of her husband's farm. One day they went to a North Riding Meet, and when hounds moved off Joe and his daughter trotted quietly about the lanes, going very carefully so as not to head a fox, for though murder is a sin, and arson is a sin, and thieving is a sin, the sin of sins for both Joe and his daughter is to head a fox. They had been standing about for twenty minutes or so, in a narrow lane, when suddenly the horse cocked its ears and Joe smiled as he heard the horn sound behind them to the right. He twisted round in his seat and saw a green, hilly country, very trappy for horses, with a small covert in a slight depression ; then Joe heard the horn again, and this time its sounded well ahead of him.

" What's up ! " thought he : " this is no place fur an echo ; theer's summat varra strange aboot these two horns " ; he turned round a second time and saw hounds streaming out, with the pink-coated brigade not far behind, and then, looking ahead, he saw another pack.

" By gow ! " he exclaimed, as he watched the second pack streaming up to meet the first, with their field well up ; and with a second " By gow ! I'se capped ! " Joe stood up in the gig and viewed a fox crossing a long pasture with only one field between him and the pack behind, and only one field between him and the pack in front.

"He's a gonner," said Joe. Then followed a great to-do, as the Hurworth huntsman, knowing he had run over into Bedale country, tried his utmost to turn his hounds.

"T' varmint hasn't a chance—not one in a thousand," said his daughter.

"He's a fox," said Joe. "Aye, that's what I said to my daughter, 'he's a fox.' Well, he just crossed t' lane, one hundred yards ahead of us, well nigh under t' horse of t' Hurworth whipper-in, then he doubled east an', in a flash, he wur out o' seet. At t' edge o' dark they had to gie him up; but mark ye, it wur a thousand to one against his gittin' away wi' t' hounds so close on him an' scent breast high. My daughter said as how she thowt t' lile cunnin' cratur knew t' moment he heard t' second horn blow 'at he wur runnin' into a second pack, an' that he reckoned to cross t' other fox's line and so muddle both packs up an' slip off while a pow-wow wur goin' forward, an' I fur one wouldn't put it past him.

"Foxes," continued Joe, "are t' cunningest craturs God iver made, but cunninger nor all other foxes wur t' fox 'at wur my last, an' in a manner o' speakin', he wurn't really mine. Nay! he niver meant fur me to git him. It's truest truth 'at a good fox is born, not made, same as a good huntsman is Bill Pennyman. Aa! but that 'White Tag' knew 'at I meant to have him someday."

"What wur 'White Tag' like, Joe," asked Jem Holden.

Joe thought a moment, then replied:

"Like? Well he wur a girt dog-fox, a dirty yaller rather than a real russet-colour—more t' colour of a wolf,

I fancy, an' he had impident yaller eyes 'at 'ud stare ye doon. Theer was a bit oot o' his reet ear—happen lost i' a fight when he wur a cub ; but what wur very special aboot him wur his brush—a bushy brush wiv a white tag at t' end at least four inches lang ; an' acause of it we christened him ' White Tag.' By gow ! in his time he took a vast o' ducks an' hens, an' he wurn't particular aboot takin' a gosling at times ; he wur an ugly fox, t' ony ugly fox I've iver seen, fur maist foxes are bonny craturs, an' t' cunnin' o' him wur beyant thought o' mortal man."

Kit Hemsworth shifted one knee across the other, and between the puffs of his pipe, said :

" I mind hearin' aboot ' White Tag ' mony a time when I wur a lad. Whya, it wur custom o' mothers in this dale to tell theer bairns when t' bairns asked for summat not easy to grant, ' Aye, thoo shalt have it t' day 'at Joe Ottiwell gits " White Tag ".' "

" A foolish thing to tell 'em," commented old Joe.

" Aye, varra foolish," echoed Bill Pennyman, who considered the remark a criticism of Joe's skill.

" Tell us more aboot ' White Tag ' Joe," said John Ackworth.

Joe's scowl at Kit broke into a smile as he looked at John.

" Aye, I will. I'll tell ye aboot my last day wi' ' White Tag '. That mornin' we met at Gayle, aboon Hawes, an' a rare muster theer was. We struck up river to owd Yorebridge. North side o' t' bridge, hounds began to feather. Venturer gave tongue, an' we had a good holdin' scent, not

too fast, away past t' 'Green Dragon' at Hardraw; by t' way he wur goin', steady an' sure-like, I knew we wur following 'White Tag'. Fra' Hardraw he ran east o' t' Force; eh! what a bonny music fallin' water made, wiv hounds speakin' ivery now an' then. Away we went, some o' t' field had already fallen oot. Up Fossdale Gill on to Fossdale Moss, wheer a danged

fool of a sheep-cur foiled t' scent. Eh, thowt I, 'White Tag's' gotten better o' me again; then in a soft peat hag I viewed his pad, so I lifted t' hounds an' almost at once they hit t' line once more. Venturer spoke to it t' first, an' then they all went like t' wind, streaming away, on an' on to Great Shunner Fell. Theer wurn't many o' t' field wiv us by this time, I'll

tell ye. Eh! but 'White Tag' wur a demon to go when he set his mind to it. Ye'll remember 'at Great Shunner Fell is ower a couple of thousand feet high, not one o' your lile green mounds i' t' Quorn coontry, an' ye'll mind, too, 'at t' hill foxes like 'White Tag' doänt toddle around in a lile circle fra' cover to cover, givin' a huntsman in a new pink coat an' shinin' buttons a chance o' makin' one o' his fancy casts; nay, here it's up an' away on a ten-mile point, an' all time 'at ye're gettin' near him he's havin' a rest i' t' bracken or happen rollin' to refresh himself in a bilberry patch, laughin' at t' way he's a-foolin' o' ye an' your hounds.

"Well, 'White Tag' knew Greet Shunner Fell as intimytely as Mrs. Moyle knaws her kitchen dresser. He knew ivery drain in t' owd lead workings in Arkengarth dale; he knew t' pleasant plain atop o' Stag's Fell, an' t' good high road to Stag's Fell Quarry; he knew ivery one o' t' Buttertubs, as dree an' dowly a place as I ken at gloamin'."

"It's varra outlandish," interrupted Kit Hemsworth, "to hear t' water drippin' doon, doon, reet doon i' t' heart o' t' earth; each Tub cud swallow up a pack o' hounds in no time. . . . Aye, it's a dowly place is t' Buttertubs."

And Ed Sokeld, another player, said:

"Tell us which way he went fra' Great Shunner Fell, Joe."

"Aye, Ed. He went west to Ure-head; then he doubled back by West Gill to Broadmea Crag. At t' Crag, hounds checked, an' I cheered them on, fur they wur gettin' spent.

"They heard my '*Try ower again! Try ower again!*'

that put fresh heart into 'em, an' a few minutes after away they were off again like smoke, away at full cry.

"If I live to be as owd as Methuselah, I shall niver forget t' bonny echoes o' that '*Try ower again!*' It lepped across to t' opposite hills, then lepped to far ones, an' than a fourth time varra faint an' beautiful, '*Try ower again!*' Then Venturer spoke; he had a deep bay; after him Hardman an' Hercules raised theer baritones an' were followed by Trim an' Trestle an' Twilight's luvely tenors, an' high abuve 'em all, sounded t' young lemon an' white bitch Hermione's treble.

"Marry! how theer voices echoed along them girt open

tops, an' as t' sun sank, t' sky became redder nor a garden rose an' wheer t' Yorkshire fells joined t' Cumbrian Mountains, t' mists wur risin' purple blue like a ripe blaeberry. Oh! t' glory of it all; it wur so wunnerful I felt like prayin'. 'Lord, dear Lord', I said aloud, 'if ony I git "White Tag" to-day I'll niver ask Thee fur onything else this side o' Heaven.'

"At Broadmea Crag I caught up wiv 'em an' cheered 'em on. Again they hit t' line, an' away we went; hounds wur gettin' closer to him by now, an' suddenly I viewed him an' saw 'at his white tag wur a-brushing t' bents. He wur headin' fur Jinglemea Crag. Heer he found a hole, t'varmint! How t' hounds chimed, makin' t' beautifullest music as ever was—basses, baritones, tenors, an' trebles all together. Bill's terrier—he carried her in a sack—bolted him, an' 'White Tag' dashed past us; away he went to t' edge o' t' Crag, an' afore I could say 'Jack Robinson' he lepped ower t' Crag. Ower he went until he hit t' ground an' fell heavily, then he went rollin' doon t' hill—doon, doon, doon like a sack o' wheat. We had to get t' hounds off t' Crags varra carefully. Jinglemea Crag is a bad place for lamin' hounds. Well, when we came up to 'White Tag', theer he lay, t' game varmint, wiv his neck broken. . . . That wur 'White Tag's' last run!"

He smiled whimsically and added "An' owd Joe's too, but"—and he turned to Kit Hemsworth with the beginnings of a frown between his brows—"Dale mothers can no longer promise theer bairns all manner o' things *when owd Joe's gotten 'White Tag'.*"

One Saturday in December, after Joe and Mrs. Moyle had had their supper, Joe sat waiting in his high-backed chair for the other domino-players to join him. He drowsed a while, then dropped off to sleep. As the dalesmen trooped up, Mrs. Moyle cautioned them to enter softly, and each in turn unlaced his boots and stepped into the kitchen in stockinged feet. The hound puppies looked up, yawned, then prepared to doze again. The players creaked as quietly as possible to the trestled table, and played stealthily for an hour an a half.

Suddenly they were startled by old Joe rising from his chair steadying himself by the table, then standing erect. The curtain had not been drawn as there was snow on the hills, and the orange light from the window was a guide and a welcome to those still out.

Joe's eyes sought the hill-lines, then he threw back his head, and in a clear, powerful voice, called out :

" Try ower again ! Try ower again ! " Then he fell heavily in a heap on the floor.

Mrs. Moyle pushed through the players, moved the table and swept to his side. The others were so consternated that none of them moved for several moments ; only Bill Pennyman shifted his chair and put his hand through his coarse flaxen hair and stared stupidly. Then Mrs. Moyle burst into a flood of low weeping, and the tears fell like winter rain on to her motherly black-satined breast. Bill rose and came across and stood by her, and then he broke into a loud sobbing, turned on his heel, picked up his boots, and noisily went out

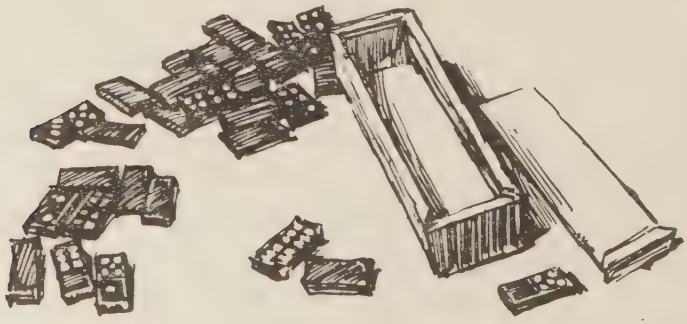
into the night. The two young hounds slunk behind a settle, whimpering every now and again. One by one the men got up, and Kit Hemsworth put an arm about Mrs. Moyle and led her to the other side of the table, while the other men lifted Joe up and laid him on a bench below the kitchen window. Jem Holden placed two pennies on his eyes and then they covered him over with a wide plaid rug.

Mrs. Moyle sat in Joe's chair, her arms folded on the table, her head on her arms. She heard Kit Hemsworth say to the others as they put on their boots :

" Tell my owd lass I'm stayin' heer this neet wi' Mrs. Moyle. She wur varra gude to my lass an' me when we wur courtin'."

When the door shut an' Kit filled the kettle to make Mrs. Moyle some tea, she looked up and said in a broken voice :

" That's what Heaven should be for most o' us, Kit, a try ower again, a . . . try . . . ower . . . again ! "



II

THE GIRL TO HER GALLOWAY "JERRY"

THE GIRL TO HER GALLOWAY "JERRY"

" Ho ! my Jerry, to-day we go
Afore sun-up, afore cock-crow,
Five good miles, by farms we know.
Away ! my Jerry, away !

" Ho ! my Jerry, then five we ride
On lile by-gangs on t' intake side
Wheer banks an' bairns are speedwell-eyed.
Git on, my Jerry, git on !

" Ho ! my Jerry, my game galloway,
Five lang miles wheer walls are grey,
Wheer ling-bobs wave an' curlew play,
Hold hard, my Jerry, hold hard !

" Five mair miles ower yonder hill,
Bluer to-day nor a girt crane's-bill,
To trystin' brig in Halton Ghyll,
Well done ! my Jerry, well done !

" What fur a score o' hard goin' miles ?
A' fur t' sake of a lad who wiles
Wi' nobbut a score of kisses an' smiles !—
Now whoä, my Jerry, now whoä."

III

HEZEKIAH TWISTLETON'S BOOKS

HEZEKIAH TWISTLETON

HEZEKIAH TWISTLETON'S BOOKS

AT the last house in the village, Hezekiah Twistleton lives with a deaf niece and a tailless, ginger kitten; no one would call him a friendly old man, and he is rather proud because he is more respected than loved. He is one of those men whom it is difficult to imagine was ever young, and yet I have seen glimpses even of Hezekiah Twistleton's youth.

My garden runs alongside his, and the one thing we share is a love of gardening, though mine is mostly devoted to

flowers and his to vegetables. During the first spring, we were on a nodding footing, and by the back end he would wish me "Good morning." As I never took advantage of this sociableness, he advanced so far as to make weather comments, and I agreed with him as became a woman. During the second spring we loaned each other tools, and I bought a ton of hay from him to eke out my own small stock. The transaction took a whole week, and at the end of it Hezekiah Twistleton liked me infinitely better because I had driven a hard bargain with him.

In May, his niece walked across to tell me that he was armchair-ridden with a touch of rheumatism; would I have a chat and a sup of tea with him?

"Did *he* ask me to come, or was it your idea Miss Twistleton?"

"Nay! He said he wur stalled a tryin' to make me hear, an' stalled a lookin' at Ginger—our cat, thoo knaws!—an' it would be a pleasant change to hear aboot your garden."

"Tell him I'll come."

. . . . .

After four cups of tea, Hezekiah Twistleton's frigid politeness gradually wore off, and as the garden had been discussed foot by foot, I sought for a new topic, and glancing at his bookshelves said:

"Why, Mr. Thistleton, I never knew that you were such a great reader," and I got up to examine several rows of

beautifully-bound books—books bound in calf and half-calf, exquisitely tooled, and amongst them several rare first editions.

"Nay, I'm no reader, I like t' look o' books, they set off a room, but I've other things to do beside readin' 'em. They belonged to Nan, my wife, an', now she's gone, Mary—that's my niece—she dusts 'em, but she's no time for readin' 'em."

"And when did your wife get time?"

"Whya, I didn't hold wi' her wastin' her time much either, but she used to read a bit after t' childer wur born. That wur her readin' time; when we wur first wed I found her once readin' by t' wash-tub, an' I told her straight I'd have no wife of mine readin' while workin'."

"And what did she say?"

"Say! She said nowt. Happen she wept a while, but she wur one of t' weepin' sort. Onyway, she knew who wur t' master, and she saved her readin' for her childer-beds."

"They are extremely beautiful books, Mr. Twistleton, and you are quite right about beautiful books setting off a room."

He looked at me keenly for a moment, changed his position in his armchair, and said,

"You're wonderin' how I came by such books!"

"I am."

"And you're hopin' I'll tell you!"

"I certainly am."

"You've got t' same look in your eyes an' t' same smile round your mouth as Nan had when she stood afore them books."

"And you don't like the books, Mr. Twistleton?"

"Aye, you're reet, lass! I hate and abominate t' books! But t' shelves need summat and it 'ud cost good brass to buy new ones to fill 'em, and so I let t' books bide; but you're reet, I hate t' books!"

"Then," I said, going over to the ingle seat, "there must be a very good reason for your hating them, because though you're not a sociable man you're certainly not an unreasonable one."

He looked at me again, hesitated, then said, "And how do you know what sort of man I am?"

I smiled at him.

"Well, at ony rate, you *do* know, and, as you say, I'm not a sociable man, but I'm not an onreasonable one. It isn't all books I hate—I've got a Bible an' a few others in my bedroom—it's *those* books, with their grand coverings and smug beginnings and their foolish stories of Asses' Heads on Carpenters, and Blackamoors a-smothering young lasses. Eh! once I looked in 'em to see what yon university lecturer had given my Nan."

I bent forward and put another log on the fire.

"Years afore you wur born, Nan's mother let rooms during t' summer months, and one summer, when Nan wur about seventeen, a man took 'em fur nine or ten weeks. He wur a tall, thin man, wi' curly hair and long white hands, an' a South Country voice. I've heard that his mother wur a South Country woman. Well, he wur a lecturer at some university, and he spent all his summer holiday here in t'

dale, and afore he'd been in Loverley a week he persuaded my Nan—she wurn't my Nan then, but I'd made up my mind to have her—that he wur in love with her, an' her foolish mother, damn her, thinkin' how she would like Nan to be a lady and marry a man who wore a white collar, did all she could to throw 'em together,"—he gave another exclamation of disgust—"an' yon books wur his presents to her."

He remained silent for some minutes, and I gazed through the window at the gorse making a beacon of Yorla Top, and at Hezekiah Twistleton's sheep and lambs dotting the smooth green hill-side.

"I wur a farm labourer in those days, an' her fond mother thought nowt to me. Nan wur aye gentle; she knew I meant to have her, lecturer or no lecturer; but I came nigh to doin' him a mischief once or twice. After a time I could do no work for watchin' of 'em. I became Nan's shadow. I'd follow 'em to Eller Moor when they went to see t' sunrise; I'd listen wiv 'em to t' cuckoo callin' in Beck Meetings Wood; an' once I caught 'em kissin' at Low Latts in t' May gloamin' and her hands were full o' cowslips. Kissin' indeed! To hell wiv his kisses! Then he and I took off our coats, an' I thowt more to him afterwards. He gave me a black eye, but I sent him to bed fur two days. Nan came a-beggin' of me not to fight him again.

"'He's goin' away soon,' she said.

"'An' you think to go with him?'"

"'He hasn't asked me yet,' she said.

" She wore a white cotton dress sprigged wi' flowers an' a green sun-bonnet that kept slippin' off, and she wur so sweet and flower-bonny I knew I'd got to have her ; she minded me o' t' pleasantness o' woodruff." (I remembered that our grandmothers used woodruff in the linen press and that its sweetest scent was given after it was crushed and dead.)

" She pined a deal after t' lecturer left, and read again and again t' books he'd given her, and he sent her more, too, with ' To Nan, from Ralph ' written all over with love messages, and he had marked fond places on some pages. Then her mother died, and I bided my time. Three months after t' funeral I wedded her an' brought her an' her hateful books ower here. T' books filled up t' owd shelves nicely, but I told her they were ony there fur t' looks of 'em, and that I wouldn't have a wife o' mine wastin' her time on sich trash ! Aye, I let her keep t' books, but one night afore our last bairn wur born I cut out all those messages ' To Nan, from Ralph.' I couldn't abide for his messages to be meetin' her eye whiles she wur mendin'. She never said nowt. Do you think she minded greatly ? "

" I don't know," I replied, " but I think she knew it was because you loved her. I think she realized that it was your way of loving her greatly."

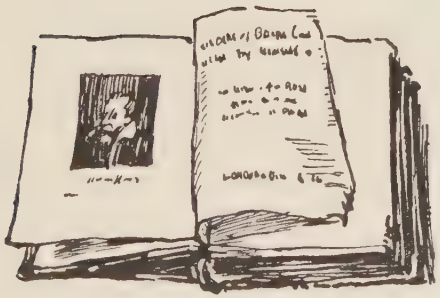
" What ! cutting t' names out o' t' books ? "

" No, letting her read them when she needed them most."

He sighed. " Well, she wur a strange lass—aye, an' so are you ; but all women is strange." Then in a very gruff voice he continued : " She wur readin' Wordsworth

just afore she died, so I wrote in it : ' To Nan, from Hezekiah.' Then I found out how much t' book had cost, an' I sent t' brass on to yon lecturer . . . We buried t' book wi' her—aye, t' book *I'd* given her an' not him."

He scowled up at the shelves. "An' it's because they're hers I keep 'em, tho' I—hate—every—one—on—'em ! "



IV

MOORHAWES DANCE

MOORHAWES DANCE

MOORHAWES village gave a dance in the schoolhouse, and many folk came: some drove from neighbouring dales, others tramped over miles of intake and heather, for it was years since there had been a dance at Moorhawes. Parson Gibson had not held with late evenings, and had forbidden the use of the schoolroom for dancing but Parson Ellis believed in folk enjoying themselves; he liked to hear the lads laughing, the girls giggling, and the mothers gossiping over a cup of tea, and to see the fathers having a pipe over a glass of beer.

The schoolroom was decorated with flags and holly garlands, and a spray of mistletoe hung from the centre lamp, which had a new shade of red crinkled paper. Everybody got kissed that night, even Meg Newbould, who had long ago given up all thoughts of getting a sweetheart ; but the bonniest girls got kissed the oftenest, for men are the same at Moorhawes as they are at most other places.

Everyone danced well, and a stranger might have wondered how girls who could get no dancing lessons and men who were heavy-treading in the day-time became lithe and nimble when the aged piano and fiddle resounded.

Parson did not dance ; he pleaded Anno Domini ; but he chose the tunes and played the piano and looked over his glasses and forgot to play if an extra merry scream greeted his ears. In the middle of a dance, if he saw a girl sitting lonesomely, he would stop playing, and walk across and lead

her out to the group of sheepish young men who were lounging against the piled-up desks.

Parson's wife was too deaf to take much part in the proceedings, but she poured out tea and coffee until a less valiant arm would have ached.

I reckoned myself fortunate to be invited, but I was specially asked by Ephraim Hardcastle. He was over eighty, and his missus had once told him she liked me. Mrs. Hardcastle was supposed to have the "seeing eye". Neighbours brought their friends for Mrs. Hardcastle to read. She had no idea by what process she knew things about people, but she certainly possessed some means of knowing in a flash what most of us take weeks, months, and sometimes years to find out. When Mrs. Hardcastle died Ephraim was broken-hearted, but I made him set to and help me fashion a bonny wreath ; then I fixed his crape arm-band and tied his black tie.

As his daughter (a seamstress in Leeds), was unable to come to the dance, Ephraim invited me in her stead. I had many partners, big and small, fat and lean, and amongst them a dialect poet who belonged to the hill-tops and who worked in the Moorhawes Quarry. He was by way of being a student of astronomy in his spare time, and with him I went out to look at the Plough, whose handle almost touched the hills on the far side of the dale. From the school play-yard we could not see much of the eastern sky, so we made our way up to Baal Rocks, a group of crags on the edge of the moors ; wrapped in tweed jackets, we sat and squabbled as to the colours flashing in Sirius.

After a little while we were joined by another person, whose face I could not see plainly in the starlight. He bowed slightly as he said, " Our dance, I think." The dialect poet rose sulkily and remarked that " theer wud be a white frost afore mornin' " ; then the new-comer offered me his arm and led me down from the crags. The intake grass was short and velvety and through the schoolroom door came the sounds of the old piano and the fiddle.

" Wouldn't you like to dance out here ? " asked my partner, and putting an arm about me he guided me over the sheep-cropped grass. There was a gap in the stone wall wide enough for three cows to walk through abreast, and through this gap we danced on to the young sprouting heather. It felt springy beneath our feet, and scattered about lay little swamps and pools, which my partner avoided with as much skill as if they had been other dancing couples. Then with a quicker step we swung over hummocks of bilberry and ling until we reached a gate overlooking a ghyll, dark with rowan, birk, and thorn.

" Do you hill-step ? " he asked, much in the same manner as my previous partner had inquired whether I reversed.

" I'm afraid I don't know the new steps," I answered apologetically.

" Ho ! " he laughed, " the hill-step is as old as the dales. I expect you have done it afore ; happen you know it by another name. Let's try. Take two short steps to the edge of this hill, then a long one to the edge of yon hill, and if you

like we can reverse or we can keep on towards Barden Fell and Ingleborough."

Then we rose, and below I saw the flashing crystal of the Heron Beck almost hidden among the black-boled trees, and then the next second the heather again swished under our feet.

" Easy, isn't it ? " he said.

" It's like being a leaf in the wind," I replied breathlessly.

" You would go much higher than that in the leaf dance, and descend in a splendid spiral. Let's try ! "

I found myself being spun down the hill-side to the beck, so dizzily that I leaned against my partner for support.

" It's not so easy, that dance, unless practised every autumn ! It makes your head spin, eh ? "

" I'd no idea the leaf felt like this," and I sat down on a boulder by the beck, whose waters looked steely black. Then I tried to look at my programme to make out my partner's name, but the writing was too indistinct, and the moon was behind a cloud. He stood nearby, counting the stars as the dale shepherds used to count their sheep, in fives on their fingers :

Yain, Tain, Eddero, Peddero, Pitts :
Tayter, Later, Overro, Coverro, Dix :
Yain-o-dix, Tain-dix, Eddero-dix, Peddero-dix, Bumfitt :
Yain-o-bumfitt, Tain-o-bumfitt, Eddero-bumfitt, Peddero-o-bumfitt, Jiggit.

Then, looking eastward, he said :

" They'll be penning them soon."

" Who will ? " I asked.

" His shepherds ; there are none missing to-night, but in the snow-clouds many a star gets snowed under, and then the shepherds up yonder are nigh as busy as dale shepherds after a snow-storm."

The moon was setting, and it fell straight into his arms, and then went out as a candle does when it hits the carpet.

" What have you done with the moon ? "

" You can be quite sure I don't waste anything," he replied, " I've trimmed the wick and I'll keep it for to-morrow night. With care I can always keep a good moon twenty-nine days. There's no sense in using it longer than we need. Yonder the dawn's coming up over Ruiscliffe." He looked down at the moon in his arms. " This moon is good for a few nights yet ; I've got scores of moons stored away, but it does seem queer to me how some folk who have very few moons can waste them anyhow. It fair caps me, because I hate waste. I'll give you a few minutes longer to rest while I gather the heather webs," and, after putting the moon in his pocket, he began collecting the fragile cobwebs that linked sprig to sprig.

" What will you do with them ? " I asked.

" Oh, they'll come in handy for making dreams of ; it's ticklish work making dreams, and you can't work on them unless you've the very finest quality of gossamer. I've known unprincipled weavers fashion them from town-fogs, which,

as every one knows, are half smoke, but I don't care for a job that is unworkmanlike. Feel this. By the crags! Not with your fingers, with your eyelashes!"

"They feel like tears."

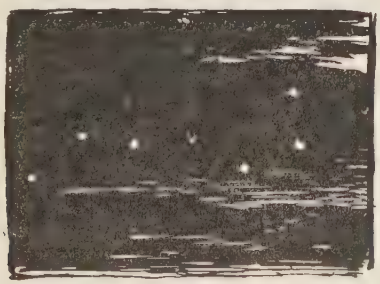
"Umph! Queer your feeling them like that, but I've gathered enough now; wouldn't you like to dance into the sunrise? Come along!"

And we danced up from the beck, over the intake, over the moor, followed by startled lapwings into the golden light which bathed the Baal Rocks. My partner's head was haloed by the rising sun, and I saw his profile strongly outlined like a rock against the sky.

"You belong to the moorland?" I asked.

"I *am* the moorland," he replied.

Around my feet lay the heather cobwebs, and I saw my dreams, lying at my feet, circle beyond circle, stretching away to the gold hills on the horizon, lassoing with a silver rope of mist the smoke of the distant hill-farms, the puff of the dale-land train, and the white spirals of the heather fires.



V

JAPONICA

JAPONICA

An old daleswoman speaks :

" Japonica ! Ay, it mak's a brave show,
But none on 'em grow as they used to grow !
It's goin' on well
But it's smallish ; hasta iver heard tell
Of Olverton Peel ? Aa ! yance on a time
When Faither an' Muther wur in theer prime
T' grandest Japonica covered our byre :
Anuther grew ower t' front door, it wur fire
During March days. Folk came fra' doon-dale
To see 'em. Thoo thinks it nobbut a tale !

" T' walls o' t' owd Peel wur a limestone, white grey,
An' mony a time I'se heard artists say
Nowt could be finer, an' then they'd despair
As none o' theer paintings wur one-half as fair
As t' breet flamin' flowers. Nearby ran a hedge
O' velvety yews wiv an up an' doon edge
Like walls of a castle ; close at theer feet
Wur crocuses gowd—a wonnerful seet—
Then a green loaning, wheer t' first cletch o' chicks
Wur reared, an' beyant it fourteen girt ricks.

" When Japonica bloomed, I first went to school,
I mind, even noo, I felt such a fool
When teacher said : ' Lil, what's t' bonniest thing
Thoo's seen ? ' An' wick as an ousel on wing
I answered, ' Japonica ! ' She said : ' I think
Lil means a big plant wi' blossom o' pink.'
Fur a' her book-larnin' she wurn't wise,
An' sin then I'se larned t' books mainly is lies
An 'maist o' t' girt volumes writ aboot flowers
Give 'em hard Latin names varra different to ours.

" When Kit an' I promised each other, that eve
How Japonica blazed, thoo'd hardlins believe !
An' t' followin' year on t' day we wur wed
A thousand buds showed theer tips o' breet red ;
Against our home-comin' a champion lot
Wur waitin' on us in a girt pewter pot. . . .

Ah ! when on that niver-to-be-forgit morn
We lost our lile Jane, our bonny first-born,
My owd Daddy made fra Japonica sprays
A parfit lile cross 'at wur luvely fur days.

" An' t' back-end our youngest lad threw down his rake
Wi' ' Mammy, farweel, I must leave ye fur t' sake
O' t' lads 'at are fightin',' a girt branch decayed
An' wur carted away wi' brother John's aid . . .
Sin' that wet gloamin' when t' telegram came
Nowt has been t' same :
Flowers came so sudden, they seemed like a flood,
As daft Pattie said, ' o' blossomin' blood ! '

" No matter if t' year wur gude, middlin' or bad,
Japonica's flowered ! o' course thoo is glad
Because thi Japonica mak's a brave show . . .
But it doesn't grow, Darlin', as ours used to grow."

VI

THOMAS BLACKAH

THOMAS BLACKAH

AS I came over Bale Bank I saw Thomas Blackah. He owns a score or two of sheep, a grudging stretch of intake on Greenhow Hill, a cow, a pig, and a few lean-looking fowls, and to make ends meet he goes out with the "beaters"

during the shooting season ; he is always the first to be ready, in spite of his seventy odd years.

" Grand day," he said, with a nod of the head, and he came up to me as I was gathering cresses on the edge of a tiny stream. Snow had fallen on the moorlands during the night, so the stream made a merry clatter.

" Aye, it's a grand day ! "

Turning so that the wind was at his back, he lit, with some difficulty, an old black pipe, then with a sideway movement of the head in the direction of the stream he said between the puffs of smoke :

" Yon beck, now, minds me of oursens.

" When we're bairns, we're aye laikin' and laughin' at life, just like yon bubblin' beck :

" then in a few years we have to go to school, but all t' same, we still tumble aboot an' sing ;

" but when schooldays is finished, tho' we still have some hours o' laikin', we doän't bubble aboot so much ;

" then we finds our first job, an' have to run a bit steadier like ;

" then happen we join anuther beck an' windflowers an' primroses grow alongside our banks until we have to pass t' first mill ; an' t' mill learns us t' duty we owe to t' lile villages ;

" then, lower doon, happen there's anuther spell o' flowers an' birds an' gardens ;

" but in t' distance theer's smoke of a girt town, an' after, we've passed thro t' girt town, past its mills an' ower its dams all t' laikin' an' t' laughter has gone out of us . . .

"Aye! I've been doon-dale an' seen what happens to lile becks like yon!"

. . . . .

I made him up a bundle of cress. He took from his pocket a large spotted handkerchief, knotted it, slipped the cresses into it, and tied it to the handle of his stick, then with a "Thank you" and another look at the stream, he said;

"It's a bonny lile beck. . . . Grand day!" And he passed on.

VII

THE WENSLEYDALE LASS

THE WENSLEYDALE LASS

Thoo has no call to worry,
  Theer's niver, niver a one
In ony dale, fur me, but thee
  Sin' Time itsen begun :
As Yore will flow fur iver
  Atween high Wensley hills,
An' bonnie becks sing leetsomely
  Ower steeans[1] in Wensley ghylls,
So will my luve, until I die,
  Wi' mony a silvery dart
Flow doon thro' t' stormy moorlands
  O' thi storm-luvin' heart !

[1] *Steeans* = stones.

VIII

MRS. SPRUCE'S GARDEN

MRS. SPRUCE'S WINDOW

MRS. SPRUCE'S GARDEN

A FEW years ago there was an old woman called Mrs. Spruce, who lived in a factory town in Airedale, and on a Saturday evening, when all the cleaning was done, she mended the kitchen fire and sat down to rest in her rocking chair for her weekly dream ; and her dream was of a garden. Each Saturday evening she added something to it ; at first it was a place of undefined greenness, pale green of sunlight through young leaves, restful green of grass-plots, dark, mysterious green of twilight, all hazed about with other colour—with petals and butterflies—but, later on, it had a little path winding down to a gate under some pines, where it met another path which led to a garden of scarlet runners, purple beets, and feathery carrots.

The following year she dreamed of fruit trees, which in a single season were laden with great round cooking apples and sun-tanned pears, and then she added a cherry tree, as there was just space for one more tree at the end of the garden ; she built a high wall, having a fancy to grow peaches and

plums, and soon afterwards she gathered basketfuls of ripe, juicy plums—hundreds and hundreds of them. She had not introduced any wasps, so her fruit was splendidly safe, and fungi and pests were unknown to her, for nothing unlovely could live in her garden.

After a few visits, she showed me the path into her dream-garden.

"Eh! dearie me, it's a reet foolish fancy, I know, but if theer's one thing aboon others I luve it's a garden. I've niver had no garden, but my owd gaffer used to be head-gardener at Heron Hall, an' when I wur a bairn I mind him sayin', 'If thoo does well by flowers, flowers 'ull do well by thee.' He used to give us geraniums, girt red blooms, fur t' winder-boxes, but they're terrible expensive is flowers nowadays. . . . I'd like to know more aboot gardens. I've not planted ony flowers yet, so one Saturday I'll begin makin' some flower-beds, an' next time ye come ye'll tell me what flowers to grow."

Next time I took with me the September catalogues which bulb growers send out as temptations to thrifty gardeners, and over several cups of tea Mrs. Spruce decided to have two dozen single snowdrops near the gate.

"It 'ud be a kind of welcome to callers."

I suggested crocuses.

"Eh! I'm thinkin' I've spent enow; two dozen snow-

drops 'ull be two shillings. I'd better wait for crocuses while next Saturday."

"All right," I said, "but it's better to get all bulbs into the ground before October," and with a sigh of pleasure she decided on a dozen crocuses—"King of the Blues," according to the catalogue "magnificent blue, extra large bulbs."

A few weeks later Mrs. Spruce caught a severe chill, so her cousin came to do the housework, and the dream-garden grew apace.

"Eh! Luve, it's goin' on rarely; t' crocuses are beginning to show."

"No, Mrs. Spruce, this is only October; they have no right to be showing yet; there will be a severe frost soon, and then where will your precocious crocuses be?" and I looked over the catalogue I had with me to see what Christmas flowering bulbs she might grow, for, like most beginners, she was in a great hurry.

After leaving her, the catalogue proved too difficult to resist, and I wrote off for a collection of bulbs for indoor growing. Six single blue hyacinths, twelve trumpet daffodils, six scarlet and six golden tulips, and some purple crocuses, and, lastly, some heavenly blue scillas.

A week later they arrived, and with bowls, bulbs, earth and fibre Mrs. Spruce and I made her kitchen table an unseemly sight. We were in the middle of planting when

Harry Spruce, her younger son, came in, disguising his astonishment very courteously.

I pointed to the bulbs. "Those are daffodils, these crocuses, and the little ones are scillas."

"By gum, they're so much alike I couldn't tell t' difference!"

"Eh! Harry, it's that way wi' t' childer; when they're lile, they all look alike. They grow up verra different, but they all need a deal o' care."

. . . . .

Some months afterwards a letter came from Harry Spruce. "Mother was ailing, but four scillas were in flower, and she thought they might not last more than three days longer."

I went to see her. She was sitting up in bed, and her son had arranged all her bulb bowls on a table between her bed and the window.

"I'm gettin' an old woman, Doy, an' it 'ull be time for me to go to our Jim soon" (her elder son who was killed at Armentières), "but I hope I weän't be called ontil a' them bulbs have finished flowerin'; t' tulips are only showing tips o' t' leaves, but theer's a bud on one o' t' daffodils."

Then, settling back among the pillows, she said with a deep sigh : " I've been thinkin', Luve, theer shouldn't be ony homes in all t' world wi'out a strip o' garden."

IX

LETTERS SENT AND UNSENT

LETTERS SENT AND UNSENT

LETTER from Miss Hazel Raine to Captain Romer Davenant:

Ulshaw Peel
Ulshaw
Wensleydale
21st September 192—

Dear Captain Davenant,

On August 13th, at the age of seventy-one, my grandmother Lady Raine (*née* Hazel Hume), died at Ulshaw Peel,

Several times before her death she expressed a desire that I, her namesake and eldest granddaughter, should read, and, after reading, do as I considered best with all her correspondence. She had a way of keeping letters she liked, and would write the date that a letter was received on its envelope and then pigeon-hole it. Under several bundles of letters from her many friends, and on top of little pencilled scrawls from her children, I found a small packet, carefully tied up and addressed in her clear hand-writing :

TO ROMER DAVENANT

Following her wishes, I have read these letters, and as they will be a solace to you for whom they were written so many, many years ago, I send them all.

Of course, I cannot remember my grandmother as you knew her, but I do remember her as a very beautiful old woman, slender and erect to the end, her hair silvery and wavy, and her smile—well, her smile must have been as you knew it ; it had a way of rising slowly from the corners of her lips until it captured the loveable and witty spirit in her eyes.

Sincerely yours
HAZEL RAINE

Herewith Grandmother's unsent letters.

Letter I

WHARTON HALL
WHARTON-IN-WENSLEYDALE
14th August 1886

DARLING ROMER,

Shall I ever post this letter? I do not know! It is now seven days since you bade me good-bye. The sun lit up every corner of your seaside village. Everywhere there was August sunshine. As you waved me good-bye, could you not guess that it was only by a great effort of will that I did not call to you, "I cannot say good-bye, I will never say good-bye, only Death can make me let you go. Take me with you, Romer, keep me with you always."

Sweetheart, you would never judge me so unfairly as to think me afraid of poverty. You have told me many times that you are a poor man. I knew it from the day we first met—who expects a Ship's Officer, Dear Heart, to own the wealth of the Indies?—and, though it may sound trite, it has been said by so many before me, and will be said by so many after me—if I had the riches of the world, I should be a beggar without your love; but, Romer Lad, we spoke of these things the day we tramped from Carlton over Penhill, the day we saw a fox-cub get up and frolic away, when the Hambleton Hills, through the boles of the moor-pines, showed as blue as the midsummer crane's bill. You told me then of your mother's early struggles, her hampering lack of money, the slow death of all her hopes for some leisure in which to

seek loveliness, but, Dear Heart, I am not afraid ; I have no fear save only the fear of your forgetting me.

Oh, keep a place, *the* place, in your heart for me.

HAZEL

Letter II

WHARTON HALL
WHARTON
WENSLEYDALE
14th September 188—

DARLING LAD,

It has been raining all day. It was through a veil of rain that I first saw you. You were on leave ; you had got a permit from my father to fish in the Yore. You were buttoned up in an old waterproof with a pair of my brother's waders on, and you were wearing an old floppy hat pulled well down over your eyes. When you saw my father and me, you waded slowly to the bank, and how delighted you were to show us the few grayling you had spent the whole morning in securing.

After we had left you, above the music of the running river and the rain pattering on the alder leaves, I heard my father say : " A well set-up and well-mannered young man ! What a pity it is that he has not had the same social advantages as you children, because then we could offer him more intimate entertainment," and I felt very heart-heavy thinking over his words.

This day of rain and all the days have been full, brim-full,

of you. You are my first thought on waking, Lad, my last thought on sleeping, there is no region in my world of thought where you are not.

The thought of you is higher than the highest star, the thought of you is deeper than the deepest sea ;

the thought of you is sweeter than the little prophet days of April, the thought of you is sadder than the last gold evenings of October ;

the thought of you is wilder than the great gales that crash down dale during the Equinoxes, and the thought of you is peacefuller than snow falling upon the heather hills.

Oh ! be near me in thought to-night, Beloved !

HAZEL

Letter III

NORTH SEA HOTEL
WHITBY
2nd October 188—

To-day I accompanied my father here to see some friends. He thinks a few days of sea air will do us both good.

The fisher ketches are coming in and out the harbour just as they did three months ago, when you and I set out on a little sailing boat.

Do you recall how clearly the white yachts were reflected in the green-grey water, and how the big waves pounded noisily on the breakwater.

Coming out of the harbour, do you remember how the little boat bobbed about; how the waves leapt over her bows; how the spray was thrown in sheets over us; how the wind cried thro' her rigging, and how she shivered when an extra large wave struck her!

We neither of us spoke, for the wild sea-music held us both, and we forgot everything in our combat with the wind and the tide.

Your mouth was set, and from your seat by the tiller you watched hungrily every dip in the oily plunge and swirl of the large waves. Oh! the awful candour of the foam above submerged rocks. There was a strong current running and I wondered if you knew this coast well, but the hissing and roaring of the waters made speech an impossibility.

. . . . .

Romer, Lad! your eyes were reckless, you cared for nothing save pitting your skill against the power of that cruel breaking treacherous sea. During that sail, you were kin to Drake, to Frobisher, to all the men to whom danger is a joy—and who hold Death as the sweetheart of Life. You glanced at me but once, then you kept your eyes ahead, but towards the end of the sail, as we safely rounded the buoy outside the harbour, you looked at me again and this time your eyes kissed me.

. . . . .

How you enjoy a difficult enterprise—there was no other boat of her size out that day. To you that mad hour in the screaming wind, among the great combers, was worth years of saner life—that was three months ago, and if we may never sail again together, Sweetheart, would to God that sail had been my last!

. . . . .

To-night the sea speaks of you, and the winds, too. All things in Nature speak to me of you, Romer, only you yourself are silent.

HAZEL

Letter IV

WHARTON HALL
WHARTON
WENSLEYDALE
28th October 188—

DARLING ROMER,

This golden day I've been alone on the moor-top, up and over Penhill, thinking of the day we were there together.

Though I live to be a very old woman, I shall never forget the beauty of that day. I think Penhill has bewitched me, the long, swinging skyline of it seems to have got entangled somehow among the strings of my heart.

Its russet mirth when the winds chase the great clouds over it. Dale-head to dale-end lying at our feet! Hawes away

behind grey hill-shoulders, Addleborough hailing us from the north-west, Leyburn with its grey roofs throwing a greeting across the river, and, hidden among yellow woodlands, Middleham and Jervaulx, then miles of good riding country —away and away to the Cleveland and Hambledon Hills.

You showed me a leveret alongside a dry stone wall—in the meadow where the mushrooms grow. He hesitated for a second, and when he heard our approaching steps, he flew, a brown flash into the sheltering ragworts.

. . . . . .

But I want to be with you on Penhill in the winter, when the winds lash round its head and a long shawl of snow hangs from its shoulders down to its ankles in our treacherous Yore. I love a great storm as you do, Romer, and who can know a land or a sea or a man by seeing them only in the summer sunlight ? . . .

Letter V

WHARTON HALL
WHARTON-IN-WENSLEYDALE
17th November 188—

ROMER, DEAR HEART,

Day after day goes by, and the hope of hearing from you is slowly dying.

To-night there is a gale sweeping down the dale, sweeping away my confidence and all my peace.

Have you forgotten me, Beloved, or is your love for me

but a creation of my own foolish imagination ? Have I read too much in your caressing words or observing eyes ? Is all that I deemed love nothing more than the cheerful friendliness you give to all your world ?

Romer, I cannot go on without some sign of your love ! Surely I do not misread you ? Men like you do not change, Beloved, when once they have given their love, but did you ever give it to me ?

I remember how your mouth straightened when I used to ask you questions you did not care to answer !

Have I misinterpreted your words, misunderstood all your desire to be with me ? Can every girl bring that welcoming look into your eyes, that loving, possessing tyrannous look !

Crash ! there is a great groan as of the end of an old tree. . . .

Yes, from my window, by the light of a moon struggling free of clouds, I can see that the old beech by the river has fallen. The pity of it ! fourscore years to come to supreme beauty, a few seconds to lay it low ; it will take six woodmen more than a day to remove the lovely wreck.

Dear Heart, if you would but write just once, " I love you, Hazel "—then, though we might never meet again on this earth, I would make a brave effort to take up my life's duties, strong and secure in the knowledge of your love.

Oh ! there is nothing save my hope of Heaven that I would not forfeit to-night so that I might hear you say but once, " I love you, Lass ! "

HAZEL

Letter VI

WHARTON HALL
WHARTON-IN-WENSLEYDALE
Star-time, 14th December 188—

I am going away, Romer, and I may not see you for a long time. This thought has made many nights seem starless. God ! how shall I live months, perhaps years, without seeing you, hearing you, hoping to win your love.

. . . . .

Just now a star like a small white bird of Hope has flown down the sky. Do you remember how I taught you to wish at the sight of a falling star and how you kissed me for such foolishness ?

Actually, it is only five months since we watched for meteors from Flamborough jetty. It was so still we could see the big stars reflected in the water, bands of zig-zagging silver on the lazy sea—a sea of wishes, a sea of dreams, a sea of tears—and as we watched star-reflections in the water, a shadowy ketch crept in from the North, gliding nearer and nearer, until we could make out her mainsail, mizzen and jib. For one instant her mainmast caught golden Capella as a lamp . . . then she crept in nearer and nearer until we could hear the men's voices aboard, and hand in hand we watched her pass on into the dark crescent of a harbour.

From that stone jetty, what glories of the skies have you

not shown me, stars rising from cloudy beds, stars westing into belts of mist, nights when the sapphire darkness folded its great wings above us, when in the hushes I dared not ripple the stillness by even whispering your name.

Letter VII WHARTON HALL
WHARTON-IN-WENSLEYDALE
The last hour of the old year

Good-bye, Beloved.

This love is a madness and must be fought. God be thanked that only He and I know of this struggle in my heart.

Like the torrential spates of my peaty rivers, you are flooding the meadows of my mind ;

like the never-ceasing ebb and flow of the sea, you are for ever dashing against the breakwaters of my heart ;

like moonlight, the thought of you transfigures the moor hills of my soul, and not only are you rendering my Duty a pale jaded thing, you are, oh ! my Lad, usurping the very throne of God Himself.

Others will love and suffer long after you and I are laid to rest ; if only my suffering could spare those who come after us a tithe of my heart's sorrow, then I should feel that some at least of my loving might not have been in vain. . . .

God guard you and love you, Romer.

Good-bye,

HAZEL

Letter from Captain Romer Davenant to Miss Hazel Raine :

No. 14 Marine Avenue
Whitby
24th September 192—

Dear Miss Raine,

What can I write ?

What can I think ?

When these letters were written—more than forty years ago—I was First Officer on a cable ship with little prospect of being able to keep a wife, and at the same time a mother. What right had I to woo the loveliest and, alas ! the wealthiest girl in Wensleydale ? We should never have met save that

I did her brother some slight service for which he asked me to have a week's fishing on one of my holidays.

But I should not have been human if I had not loved Hazel Hume. After my leave in Wensleydale, I rejoined my ship and spent most of '86 mending the lines between Valentia and Newfoundland. During my next leave my mother was very ill and died a few days before I had to return to my ship. This time I was bound for Pacific waters, and during '87 we laid and mended over 4,000 miles of cable to New Zealand. On that trip I saved most of my earnings, and on my next leave, hoping against hope that Hazel Hume might still be free, I returned to Wensleydale, dreaming that if she had not forgotten me, I now had the means of making a little home for her. How green and fragrant her dale was! I took a room at the " Swan " Inn, the same room, where the cocks crowed at the same early hour, and after breakfast wrote a note to her father asking for a permit to fish his waters. Then, after I finished, the pleasant gossiping hostess of the " Swan " informed me, on reading the address on the envelope, that, within a few weeks, " Lady Raine, her that was Miss Hazel Hume, thoo knaws, wud be havin' her first bairn, an' 'at fur t' sake o' t' owd Raine family, every one hoped it wud be a lad."

I have read and re-read many times these letters you sent. It is a great joy to have them even towards the end of my life.

May I hope that your love may have a happier ending.

Yours faithfully

ROMER DAVENANT

Letter from Miss Hazel Raine to Captain Romer Davenant :

Ulshaw Peel
Ulshaw
Wensleydale
26th September 192—

Dear Captain Davenant,

I believe that Grandmother Hazel, when she decided not to destroy her letters to you, realized that you would not receive them until all chance was ended of their making unhappiness for those she affectionately learned to like and respect.

Because of your wishes for the happiness of my love, I should like to tell you that I think, by bequeathing her letters to me and desiring me to read them, she realized the opportuneness of them to me and my " Romer," whose name is Ralph.

Like Grandmother Hazel's lover, Ralph is poor and proud and a sailor man away with the Fleet in China Seas, and it is very likely (as he refuses to make a home for me with my money) that we shall have to wait many years before we can marry but in spite of his pride and his relative poverty, my letters to him *shall not remain unsent,* and, dear friend, if Grandmother Hazel had been born in the twentieth instead of in the nineteenth century, neither would hers.

Yours affectionately
Hazel the Second

X

HARRY'S AUNT

HARRY'S AUNT

'What's up, Susan ?
Thoo does look dree,
Hast fallen oot wi' my nevvy ?
Theer is nowt wrong wiv him, dear lass,
Save 'at he allus spends his brass.
I knaw thi Muther's thinkin' of
Ben's Arthur—much she kens of luve—
Tho' Arthur wur a millionaire
An' allus spoke thee soft an' fair
An' put a di'mond on thi finger,
Thi thowts 'ud still on Harry linger.

" Harry *is* quick.
No ' *by your leave,*'
An' it wur nobbut yester-eve
Speakin' of Arthur, he shouted,
' *I'd like to smash his blasted head*
I would an' all ; I can't abide
Him hangin' round our Susie's side ! '
Arthur has farms an' brass i' t' bank
But then he's white-eyelashed an' lank
As a stack-prod ! [1]
He luves thee well,
While Harry glowers an' growls, ' *Oh, Hell !*
I'm off ! ' . . .
but doan't let him go
For, Susie, Lass, he luves thee so ;
He luves thee so he cannot sleep.
It fair 'ud make a body weep
To hear him cussing t' owd Tom cat
Mornin' 'at thoo an' Arthur sat
On t' station bench, while t' train steamed in.
—I've telled him swearin' is a sin—
Thoo knaws just how his dark eyes burn
If I correct him, how he'll turn
Away.
He's spoilin' for a row
Wiv Arthur.
Susie, tell him now

[1] *Stack-prod* = a stick used for sticking into a stack in the process of thatching.

'At thoo luves him :
I knaw thoo does
Thoo's turned as red as ony rose.
He'll niver ask thee t' *reason why* ?
He is that proud he'd liefer die
Than ask an' not receive an ' Aye.'

" Give him a chance, Lass, he's a lad
'Ud make a woman verra glad,
Is theer owt better on this Earth
Than a dale-lad of proper worth
Who's niver had a wish to woo
Anuther lass ?
He'll aye prove true :
Horses an' beasts are gude to have
An' it is reet to scrape an' save,
But what's all to a brave strong arm
To be atween thee, Doy, an' harm,
A luvin' heart, a steadfast will
To mak' a way :
doänt these things fill
A woman's life far better nor
A girt house wiv a girt front door ?
My nevvy's bairns 'ud be mair sweet
Than ony childer 'at I meet. . . .
What dark blue eyes, what coal-black curls
'Ud Harry give his leetsome girls,

An' tho' they'd make an awfu' noise
Thoo'd bear him eh ! sich bonny boys !
If he says, '*Is it true, Susie,*
Thoo's taken Arthur ?' laughingly
Tell him thoo niver mean to marry
Onless t' girt dundernoll's named Harry ! ''

XI

THE GREENHOW TRAMP

THE GREENHOW TRAMP

WE overtook him coming down Greenhow Hill; like us, he was bound for Pateley. He was resting by a stone stile, enjoying the October sunlight. Below him lay the valley

of the Nidd, green fields and stone walls until the river broadened into the silvery reservoir of Gowthwaite. He was small and old and ragged, but very clean, and he was looking at a sign that had been erected for travellers.

CROWN HOTEL

Garage for Motors.

12.30 daily.

12.30 *daily*. That last line received his most earnest attention. It conjured up visions of hot roast beef, of steaming Yorkshire pudding, of apple tart, or apple dumpling, with cheese. My companion read it, too, and turning to the old tramp, said :

" Seems a good place to put up at. Are you going there ? "

The tramp turned slowly towards us, and shook his head, then a slow smile glimmered in his lined, weather-beaten eyes.

" Nay, I wur just lookin' at it. I used to knaw t' gentleman 'at kept t' Crown, but it's close on fifty year sin'. He wur a girt man wiv a deep voice, fond of a drop o' good liquor an' varra sociable-like. I heerd as how he died o' it—he wur drivin' home in his gig one neet after a bit of a do wi' some friends, when his horse took fright an' he fell oot o' t' gig an' wur killed instantanyous. Ay ! he wur a varra sociable man."

We sat down near him, and my companion asked:

"Have you come far to-day?"

"I've coom fra' Grassington; it's a pleasant road but varra windy on top, still it's nowt to complain about on a day like this."

Here he was interrupted by a long bout of coughing.

"A bad cough," commented my companion.

"Ay, it is that," said the tramp, "an' in a manner o' speakin', I'se no reet to it. It wur all along o' goin' into them chemical works at Huddersfield. I wur too old to serve in t' war, so they put me into some chemical works what wur makin' stuff to fill t' big shells wiv; I'd been 'at it ivery day for close on a year when one neet—I wur on neet-shift—I fainted away, just like a woman, an' when I came to there wur a docter a-leanin' ower me, lookin' very anxious-like, an' he said, 'Young man!'—I wurn't young, ye'll mind, it wur just his way o' talkin'—'young man, ye'll have to quit this here an' get oot into t' fresh air. Fresh air, open country is what you need onless you've a mind to kick t' bucket reet away.'"

He was stopped by another fit of coughing.

"Aye, it wur them chemical perfumes what did me in—do you think if it wurn't fur my health I'd be walkin' aboot like this at t' age o' seventy-two?"

Another fit of coughing, and then he went on:

"Eh! but a man larns a lot about his ain land trampin' ivery day. Theer's scarcely a 'House' 'at I doän't know."

"A house?" I asked.

"Ay, what ye call a *workhouse*. I can tell ye which to go to an' which to keep clear of, an' because ye've both been so friendly like, I'll gie ye a varra good bit o' advice: if either on ye has to coom down in t' world, same as I've had to do—fur in my best days I wur earnin' five and thirty shillings a week—well, as I wur sayin', if either on ye happens on bad days, remember my advice: if ye have a bit o' brass, use it an' go to t' 'Model' on t' wet neets; at t' 'Model' a bed costs eightpence, an' theer's food enough fur fourpence. Doän't sleep in on fine neets, for t' lee side of a hayrick makes a grand bed, and sitha, doän't go to t' 'House' on any neet save a Saturday neet. Saturday neet is all reet, as t' next day is a Sabbath, an' being a Sabbath, theer's no stones to be broken. Other days they mak' you break stones afore leavin', but on a Sabbath, you can eat and rest an' theer's no stone-breakin', '*for in it thoo shalt do no manner of work!*'"

XII

MRS. BUFFEY ON BIRDS

MRS. BUFFEY ON BIRDS

MRS. BUFFEY is a neighbour, and she has just lost her roller-canary. I called this evening to condole with her over her loss, because it was a pleasant bird and only "*rolled*" at intervals, not like some canaries that "*roll*" all the time, so that one is compelled to cover them with shades.

Mrs. Buffey was very sympathetic when we lost our cow, and came to the byre every day. After a decent interval she would say, " Eh, luve, she's very badly ! " then three minutes' silence, and, " She's not t' cow she wur ! " Another silence, broken only by the cow's moans, " I fear you'll lose her ! " and then, " I mun frame for off."

For three weeks she came in every day to inquire, so it would have been unneighbourly not to have called about her canary.

I entered her parlour, and the empty cage was draped in crape. Mrs. Buffey was wearing a black dress and large jet ear-rings.

" Nay, I'll never care about another canary like I cared for Jim. I miss him terrible. A widow's house is awful lonesome without a bird."

" Why not have a good talkative parrot ? " I suggested.

For a few minutes she did not reply, then she said slowly :

" There was a parrot in my first place, when I wur a young lass ; it wur afore I married, and t' gentleman's name wur Bennet. Captain Bennet, folk called him, and he had one of them small, green, blue-faced parrots. I used to tend it, and it got that fond of me it wouldn't let ony one else give it a bath. For me it would stretch out first one wing, then t' other, and laugh and chunter all t' time, and when it saw me comin' it would dance on its perch, it would.

" Well, luve, in those days there used to be competitions

held for parrots—not for which wur t' biggest or bonniest parrot, but fur t' parrot that would talk quickest.

" Captain Bennet had a mind to enter his parrot for one of them competitions at Cockleton, so he sent in his name and address, and his parrot's name and age, and ontil t' day o' t' competition I talked to yon bird for hours, and he talked to me quite a deal, and whenever he saw me comin' he'd say, ' Good mornin', sweetheart,' as polite as anything.

" Captain Bennet had to go away t' day of t' competition to see some friends from foreign parts, so I took t' parrot to t' competition, and I was very flurried when I found I was a bit late and all t' other folks had their parrots out ready for t' competition.

" You see, luve, t' prize went to t' parrot that spoke first, and I was in a great way lest ony of them other parrots began talkin' afore I got ours out and set him down on t' table.

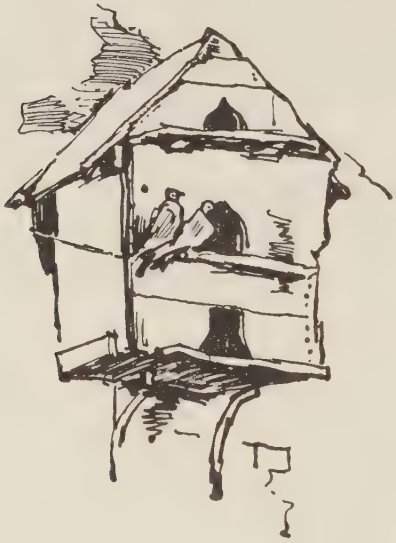
" Eh ! Dearie me, he'd no sooner been set down than he looked all round t' room—it was a big room, chock-a-block with folk—that parrot just looked round t' room, then he stretched his head forward and screeched out, ' My God ! What a lot of parrots ! ' "

. . . . .

" Aye ! He won t' prize, but I was terrible 'shamed of him, and after all t' pleasant rhymes and Scripture verses I'd taught that bird !

"Nay, luve, I wouldn't have another parrot. Parrots can shame folk; you never know where even t' politest parrot has been eddicated. There's no relying on them.

"I think I'll get a couple of fantail pigeons. They're companionable birds and you know what to expect of fantails!"



XIII

THE SHEPHERD'S FUNERAL

THE SHEPHERD'S FUNERAL

A LILE wind kindly blaws to-day ;
They're takin' Dick fra' ower t' way
To Dallow.
Dick 'ud be reet fain
To rest theer, fur he's had a main
O' trouble.

He'll be seventy-four
Born an' bred on Dallow Moor.
A shepherd ? Aye ! a good one, too,
An' he'll be missed by not a few.
Seems such a pity he should go
Just now, but spring cooms varra slow
Into these parts.

Afore he died
He said, *" Eh ! but I'd like to bide*
To listen to a ring-ousel sing
An' knaw 'at it wur really spring,
To hear t' gowd plover an' lapwing
Calling aboon Beck Meetings Wood
An' just one snipe, by gow, I should.
But all my ewes are doin' well,
Tho', if late snows coom, who can tell !
Theer are two black lambs weakly still." . . .

To-day he's laid at Dallowgill,
(Of all moors he luved Dallow best,
An' thowt it a sweet place to rest.)
He niver cared much fur low lands.
Ay ! I believe thoo understands,
Fur if thoo's bred alongside heath
Thoo allus luves it. . . .

Aboot Death,
Dost think around t' breet Courts above
Theer's some intake ?
An' dost think, luve,
Theer is some moorland, beyant fields
O' ruby walls, an' sapphire bields
An' gowden flowers, an' emerald ways,
Wheer a lile tummelling river plays !
An' happen an owd hawthorn tree
Fur folks like Dick an' you an' me !

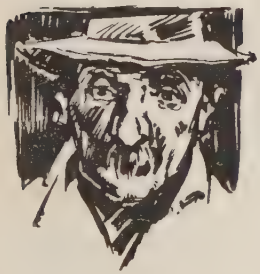
XIV

JEREMIAH CLARKE

OUTSIDE THE " BLUE BOAR "

JEREMIAH CLARKE

EZEKIEL CLARKE had a large sheep farm at the head of Airedale; it was a whitewashed farm-house with a stone-tiled roof screened from westerly winds by a plantation of oak and ash and larch. Whenever I visited Malham, Ezekiel would lend me his galloway, "Jimmy," a quiet old chestnut, quiet unless he saw a saw-mill or a steam roller, "an' both are not frequent in these parts."



One day when I returned "Jimmie" I mentioned to Ezekiel that I should not be needing the galloway again for some time as I was off to Westmorland next day.

"Westmorland?" said Ezekiel, "I've a brother 'at lives near Shap in Westmorland—my youngest brother, named Jeremiah."

"Jeremiah!" I repeated.

"Aye, Jeremiah. You're thinkin' it's odd for two on us to have sich names! Aa, but our muther wur a great reader

o' t' Bible an' named all three on us after t' Prophets. I wur named Ezekiel, my brother at Shap wur named Jeremiah, and my brother in Canada wur named Habbakuk. I think he's changed his to Harry—from what he writes, they doänt think much to t' Prophets in Canada. If you're bound for Westmorland you must meet my brother Jeremiah. You'll have a deal in common, you bein' so fond o' all manner o' dogs, and Jeremiah bein' so keen about trail-hounds. Aye, he's terrible keen about trail-hounds!"

As I knew nothing about trail-hounds, it was arranged between Ezekiel and Jeremiah that Jeremiah should take me to a hound-trail meeting.

On a dull December day Jeremiah Clarke and I met outside the bar of the "Blue Boar," kept by Mrs. Eliza Thornthwaite. Jeremiah was a rough-looking, good-natured dalesman, six foot and very bulky. The rain ran from his hat in little runnels on to his broad macintoshed shoulders, and he held by a leash a dog resembling a hound, but smaller and swifter-looking, protected by an excellently fitting macintosh coat with a little hood pulled up over its ears. He came up to me and held out a large, red hand.

"What a pretty little hound," I said, after greeting him.

"Aye, he is a pretty hound. 'Woodland Lad's' his name, by 'Ranter' and 'Merry Maid.' His grandsire wur a Patterdale foxhound and won t' silver cup at t' Grasmere Trail beside thirty-nine other first prizes."

" Trails ? " I questioned.

" Ay, trail ; hound-trail. Doänt you knaw what a hound-trail is ? Now ! just hark at that, an' you seem to have a likin' for a good hound. Well, for any one who cares about hounds, a good trail is t' grandest sport ever seen. This afternoon I'm takin' you to a meeting under Whinny Howe—it's nobbut for puppies, but it'll be a ten-mile course over fields an' fells, stone walls, hedges an' becks, an' will be well worth seein' ! "

" Is ' Woodland Lad ' running ? " I asked.

" Aye, an' if you doänt mind waitin' for a few minutes a pal o' mine an' his hound are goin' too. We'll all go to Whinny Howe together."

" And will hounds start if it continues to pour with rain like this ? "

He laughed heartily.

" Rain ? Aye, a trail is never stopped save for a fog. Sunshine, hail, rain, an' snow, all's good weather for trailing ; but fog—fog's bad—we might lose them in a fog."

A young farmer came out of the " Blue Boar " with another coated and hooded hound—a lemon and white hound. Jeremiah introduced him.

" This is Jim Lowther ; he's only had his hound ' Rally ' for a year. Wilta believe 'at last year Jim knew no more about a hound than you do, an' already ' Rally's ' won fifteen

pounds in prize money. 'Rally's' sire was a Blencathra foxhound, an' he ran forty-one trails last year. Come, we'd better start at once or you won't see t' hounds arrivin'. We should be theer by half-past two. Now for a real, enjoyable afternoon at Whinny Howe! Come on, Jim, let's look slippy an' all!"

Jeremiah Clarke and Jim Lowther, with "Woodland Lad," "Rally," and I, moved away, and we all got into a

waiting Ford car, which skidded magnificently while the driver was reversing, and Jeremiah called out in an indignant voice:

"Mind, man, have a care! Remember, you're carryin' two of t' finest puppies ever whelped!"

After an hour's run we pulled up alongside a few more

bedraggled cars near a stone bridge, which spanned a beck in angry spate. Enringing us were soaked fields, high stone walls, some larchen woodlands—the larches swaying under the lash of wind and rain. Beyond were rocky fells, partly covered with long, tangling bracken.

By two-thirty, fifty wet men had assembled, their faces shining redly, all full of interest and expectation, some leading hounds up and down to keep them warm. On seeing us several of them came up, and Jeremiah Clarke invited me to come along and see the other hounds.

"Yon black and white is 'Crafty.' He looks a bit of a lurcher, but he's a good stayer. That's 'Merry'—t' reddish dog—an' 'Coom Away' is t' one that's pullin' so hard; t' lile one is 'Echo'; he'll be a champion trail-hound when he's a bit older; he's from 'Cracker,' a Coniston foxhound; an' that's 'Firefly'—plenty of dash aboot him, but he's no good for finishin'. You see, a trail-hound has to be able to last, an' ten miles is a good race over roughish ground, an' some of these fells are terrible steep."

Whilst he was speaking a man appeared over the fell-top, and all the hounds with one accord, their hearts throbbing, gave voice and struggled and strained at their leashes.

"It's the trail-layers returning," explained Jeremiah Clarke, and in spite of the hound-music and a man shouting to the trail-layers to hurry up, I managed to understand that the drag was of aniseed.

In a few moments the twelve entrants were lined up, their coats off, their leashes slipped, their collars held lightly but firmly by their owners, and at the dropping of a flag they leapt and bounded forward, down a meadow, over a high loose stone wall, over another meadow, under a hawthorn hedge, through the beck in spate, threading a woodland, on to the fell; over the fell-top, and then lost to view, to be seen again, ten minutes later, careering along the top of a far ridge. Twenty minutes later we heard the music of their voices rise from an echoing gully.

For some time every one waited breathlessly, until Jeremiah Clarke sighted his "Woodland Lad" topping the rocky fell-line. He waved his large red handkerchief and whistled furiously. Then suddenly those twelve owners became the maddest of lads, each one whistling and waving, though his hound was at least a mile away.

As they came nearer, we made out "Woodland Lad" and "Rally" running abreast, well ahead of the others, and then the whistling became deafening, but as the two hounds descended the brackeny side to the last meadow, "Rally" pulled away like lightning from the other, and, as he won by a few yards, the excitement was intense.

"A good race," said Jeremiah Clarke, as he patted his losing "Woodland Lad."

The rain streamed off my hat in a waterfall as I, too, patted "Woodland Lad."

"I've lost five shillings, Mr. Clarke," I said, "because you didn't whistle louder!"

"Five shillings!" he chuckled. "By gow! you've never had so much fun for five shillings afore, I'll be bound!"

He was right. For sheer exhilaration there is no North Country sport to beat hound-trailing, if one goes with Jeremiah Clarke.

XV

LUKE VERILL'S MOTHER

LUKE VERILL'S MOTHER

LUKE VERILL, the dramatist, seemed one of those men who never had a mother, or sister, or cousin; he seemed to have no need of women relations. He had a pleasant flat, cooked his own breakfast, did his own mending and, though I had known him some time, he had never made any reference to his family. Sometimes he spoke of his dramas, without much enthusiasm, but he would talk animatedly for hours about wild-life photography, and was never tired of explaining pictures taken in perilous positions, snapshots of gannets on the Orkney cliffs, of nesting skuas on Hermaness, a pair of peregrines on the wing over Portland Isle, a " close-up " of a heronry in the Lake District, a golden eagle rising from its eyrie in the Red Coolins.

Therefore I was surprised when, one March day, he said, as we were tramping over Yorla Moor where he had put up a curlew:

" To-morrow, we'll go to Fylingdales. I want you and my mother to know each other."

" Have you a mother? " I queried stupidly.

" Oh, yes, didn't you know? . . . That curlew won't return for some while, and when it does the light won't be

good enough to take a picture. Let's make tracks for tea."

. . . . .

Next day we motored over the eastern moorlands to Fylingdales. Luke Verill volunteered no information about his mother, so after a while I said, " Tell me something about your mother. What is she like ? "

" My mother ? Oh ! I don't know. Fancy asking a man what his mother's like ! "

" But you must be able to describe her. Think of the scores of characters you've described in your plays."

" I can't describe my mother, but I think you'll like each other. I suppose some people would call her old—she must be close on eighty now—but somehow she's always seemed the same age to me."

. . . . .

Where the road curved round a group of sycamores in the dip of crescenting hills we drove through a gateway, then up a short drive edged with rhododendrons, and stopped before a low, mullion-windowed, stone-tiled house.

Luke Verill got out and led the way under an arch of early flowering jasmine to an old door. He opened the door, bade me enter, then called out, " Mother ! " There was no answer, so he called again, louder this time, " Mother ! " Then he opened the dining-room door, the parlour door, and finally

ran up a narrow staircase, calling in an imperious voice, "Mother!"

As I stood waiting, a little shawled figure came in from the garden, smiled at me, then held out her hand, and said as her son came down the stairs:

"I'm here, Luke. I've been in the garden waiting for you for at least half an hour."

She led me up to the dining-room fire, saying:

"Warm your hands before you take off your hat and coat."

Luke Verill expostulated: "But, Mother, why wander about the garden for half an hour when I said that we should not be here before tea-time—not before four o'clock?"

She smiled.

"I know, Luke; all the same I have been hoping you would be earlier, and during the last half-hour I have been backwards and forwards to the gate to meet you both."

She was small, slight, and erect. The lace cap she wore gave her a sweetly, old-fashioned air. Her hair was nearly black, parted in the middle, and her eyes were bright as a robin's, but far more beautiful; her nose and chin were finely chiselled, and her mouth firm and lovely. In these respects her son resembled her, but her face was expressive of patience, of smiling, brave endurance; it held something that betokened a wide sympathy with suffering. In his face there was the will to dominate others, in hers the power to control herself. After a short conversation about the road we had come, she rose.

"I'll make the tea now," she said, and left us.

"Come out and see the hills," Luke Verill said, "and my mother's beck. Both are considered to be beautiful."

"Your mother is by far the most beautiful thing here, Luke. I wonder if she would let me help with tea?"

"Certainly not; she would be very offended; you are

her guest. Come and see the beck. There was a kingfisher nesting near the bridge last year . . . in the bank under a clump of hazels."

A grassy slope, then an orchard, and we reached the river ; a peaty gossiping beck fringed with alder and hazel.

" What a strange person you are, Luke ! Here you have the rarest mother and home, and though we are the greatest of friends you have never told me about either."

He did not answer, but spent the next quarter of an hour searching among the hazels for the remains of the kingfisher's untidy nest.

A bell rang.

" That's the tea-bell ! Come along, and don't say ' No ' to my mother's bramble jam. She's very proud of her jam."

After Mrs. Verill had poured out tea into transparent apple-green cups, she asked :

" Do you like some of Luke's work ? "

Then, before I could answer, she turned to him :

" Did you bring the third act of ' The Rover ' with you ? "

He nodded, and drew a manuscript out of his pocket.

She turned to me.

" Would you mind if I read it to Luke ? It is a great help for him to hear some one else read his work aloud."

I readily agreed, and after tea she took the manuscript ; then she lit the table lamp, and we drew our chairs around the fire. Putting on a pair of spectacles, she read aloud.

As the twilight deepened, the lamplight lit up her beautiful

face ; her eyes glowed, her cheeks flushed, and her voice—in a young woman such a voice would have been an exceptional glory—in an old woman it was a wonder, a miracle !

When she finished the act she laid the manuscript on the table, and, looking intently at her son, said very directly :

" It won't do, Luke ; it flags. You compelled yourself to do those last four pages."

For a full hour she expostulated with him, giving a deep human reason for all her suggested alterations. Once she turned to me for corroboration.

" Act II. Would a girl, who had heard—in Act I—that her rival had run away with another man, declaim for thirty lines on the infidelity of man throughout the ages ? Certainly not ! She would either remain quite silent at the wonderful news, or say impulsively the first thing that came into her head, and that first thing would not be a chronological review of other fickle lovers."

Then she re-read the scene, and looked up at him :

" The last scene is an anticlimax, Luke, and you cannot use a monologue in order to let us know what your hero is thinking about. No one to-day—unless he has a high temperature—talks aloud to himself ! "

After stiff arguments, I noticed that Luke gave way on every point ; character after character she made each of her son's somewhat wooden creations come to life. It was done so gently, so tactfully, here a phrase, there a deletion, until she won him to her way. At the end she said with a sweet smile :

"The whole thing needs a lot of revision. You are too apt to make all your heroes like yourself, Luke." Then she added earnestly:

"Forget yourself, forget yourself entirely, son."

I thought, "She is a far greater dramatist than he! What will his plays be like when she is gone?"

She folded the manuscript and replaced it in his overcoat pocket, then she said:

"Now have a smoke in the garden, Luke, and I'll show your friend all the photographs I've collected of you. I've one—the first one—taken when Luke was three months old. He was such a lovely baby, dear. I've got pictures of him at all ages, the last taken on his thirty-ninth birthday!"

He smiled and left us.

Among the scores of photographs of Luke I noticed one of an exceedingly lovely young woman.

"Who is she?" I asked.

"That was Rosina Davis, taken in her first role as Perdita," Mrs. Verill answered.

"Rosina Davis!" I exclaimed. "Let me see. Rosina Davis . . . why, that was the name of a very beautiful actress of whom my father has often spoken. He was desperately in love with her, oh! long before he married my mother. Didn't she run away with a Yorkshire yeoman farmer, just at the height of her great career? My father had many pictures of her, and was most disconsolate at her marriage."

Mrs. Verill looked at me with eyes full of mischief, then she laughed merrily.

" I suppose she *was* very lovely. Everybody said so. . . ." Then she put away the picture of Rosina Davis, and said :

" Now look at this one of Luke taken just before he left Oxford " ; then, in an anxious voice, " You know, my dear, Luke must read his work aloud ; after reading it aloud with some one it is easier for him to see the weak places. Oh ! I wish . . . What will he do when he is unable to read them with me ? "

" His best work will be done while he can bring it to you," I said.

She sighed wistfully as she put all the photographs back on to their shelves.

. . . . .

On our way home I chatted to Luke about his mother, her home, her garden, and amongst other things mentioned my surprise at seeing a photograph of Rosina Davis, the beautiful actress who was my father's first love, among the Verill photographs.

" But," he said with a puzzled expression, " didn't you know that Rosina Davis is my mother ? I thought everybody knew. Why, it was a great romance ; she left the stage just at the height of her career and ran away with my father. She made her debut as Perdita, and played Miranda and Desdemona in the same year. People who saw her as

Rosalind say there will never be such a Rosalind again. . . . But she gave it all up for my father. I thought everybody knew!"

. . . . . .

Luke Verill is a well-known dramatist, but, oh! the pity of it, for playgoers' sakes, that his mother is close on fourscore!

XVI

MRS. UPPLEBY BROWN PASSES WITHOUT BOWING

MRS. UPPLEBY BROWN PASSES WITHOUT BOWING

"EMMA JANE, Emma Jane, did iver you see
Likes o' her! Some folk is terrible proud
Of a piano an' all. I'll niver agree
Wi' sich pride. Fur who's Mrs. Uppleby Brown
Tho' she cooms fra' a town,
Or her fond husband, Ben Uppleby Brown!

" Emma Jane, Emma Jane, we all on us coom
Into this world in t' varra same way
Whativer we own. Nay! I wean't be dumb!
Not even to please Mrs. Uppleby Brown
'At wur born in a town,
An' her owd husband, Ben Uppleby Brown!

" Emma Jane, Emma Jane, fur them, us an' ours,
Death's no respecter o' persons ; we all
Have to leave this owd world—*but some wi' more flowers*—
In t' varra same way ; who will miss Mrs. Brown,
That set-up Mrs. Brown,
More'n other folk ? Aye ! or Benjamin Brown ? "

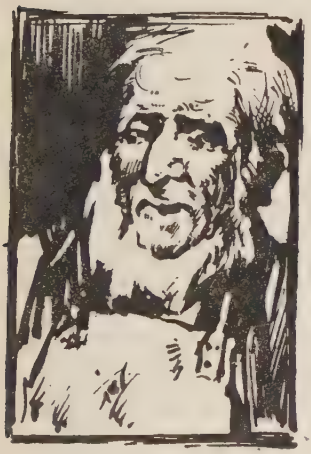
XVII

JABE, THE COBBLER OF WATH

SATURDAY
DEC 19

JABE, THE COBBLER OF WATH

PAULINE MAXWELL, my pretty friend, had seen the dale only in sunshine, so, like a mother who believes her babe never has an ugly minute, even when crying, I resolved to show her my dale in its weeping mood, for in spite of continual showers the day was one that showed the dale at its loveliest. The hills looked very far and high, pearl-like as the Hills of Faerie; the rushing river, as if it might vanish any moment under the wand of a heather mist.



"We'll go as far as Wath and see old Jabe," I said.

With the air of a lovely Christian martyr she resigned herself to a Burberry and an umbrella, and we set out.

Rain makes the songbirds very friendly, and the linnets chased each other from branch to branch, whilst the hedge-sparrows never troubled to move off the roadway. A mavis sung perched on a sycamore crown, and half a dozen coal-tits chorused among the beeches. A greenfinch flew over

the gleaming hips and haws, and on the alder bushes skirting a beck some chaffinches cheeped.

The village of Wath has one winding street with a good inn and stone cottages on one side. On the other side are fields. In the middle of the village, Jabe, the cobbler, lives and works.

I knocked on his door.

As we entered, the old man looked up, but the light was full in his face, so he did not recognize me until I spoke.

"Marry! it's thoo; well, I'se reet fain to see thee! It'll be back-end sin' I saw thee last. I thowt thoo mun think I wur dead."

"Glad to see you, Jabe! This is my friend, Pauline Maxwell."

Pauline held out her dainty hand. Jabe looked up, and carefully planted his spectacles on his nose, then he took her in with an appraising glance before giving her his hand.

"Wilta sit on t' bench?"

We looked carefully for nails before we obeyed. The conversation turned on the slackness of trade, the cost of hides, the usefulness of clogs, and handsewn *versus* machine-made shoes.

"You would not care to turn out work like that, Jabe, would you?" I asked, pointing to my friend's light shoes.

He stroked his white beard, then he bent forward and raised her right foot in his hand; very slowly he felt the thin black suède, noticed the light soles and the high French heels.

Pauline apologized gaily for wearing such unsuitable shoes, but Jabe continued to look at them very earnestly and slowly shook his head. He would not commit himself—either for or against such footwear.

Then I asked after the rheumatics.

" Pains coom an' go, but it's to be expected at my age."

At this remark Pauline began guessing his age. Of course, she guessed wrongly, and he told her with chortling satisfaction,

" I shall be eighty-seven come next fourteenth o' February. Sixty-seven ? Nay ! I wur a hale man at sixty-seven. Work did not beat me then."

His cheeks were as red as a Ribston pippin, his beard thick and snowy white, shaven round a firm old mouth, and his peat-coloured eyes held an expression of shrewd friendliness that one so often finds in the eyes of dalesfolk of all ages.

On our leaving, he tried to rise, but the rheumatics got the better of his courtesy, so he contented himself with calling after us.

" If thoo doesn't coom sooner, thoo'lt happen miss me next time ! "

. . . . .

I called again on February 14th. This time the weather was sunny ; Pauline had left, so only my dog and I went. When I entered the tiny workshop I knew from Jabe's smile that something extra good had happened.

" Good morning, Jabe ! You do look happy."

"I'm eighty-seven to-day—isn't that reason enow?"

I waited.

"An' if that isn't enow, it's St. Valentine's Day, an' I've—had—a—Valentine!'

He took from his pocket a gorgeous card with two useless-looking pink hands clasping each other, surrounded by a wreath of sugar-pink moss roses, embellished north, south, east, and west with true-lovers' knots, on a background of leafless forget-me-nots.

"Jabe! I'm surprised at you, receiving a Valentine at your time of life!"

He gave a deep chuckle.

"I'se surprised mysen. It arrived in a packet."

"A packet?"

"Aye! a packet an' all."

He paused to see the effect of his words, then continued jauntily:

"An' inside t' packet wur t' grandest baccy I ever smoked. It must have cost a sight o' brass."

"Whoever sent it?"

Then he chuckled again and pointed to the initials "P. M." which almost eclipsed two forget-me-nots.

"P. M. Aye, P.M. stands for Pauline Maxwell. . . . It's fine baccy! Begow, a lass wiv sich a bonny, trim ankle wud know, by what some folk call intooition, t' sort o' Valentine a man wud like on his eighty-seventh birthday. Two such bonny lile feet, but waeful shoes, waeful shoes; nowt but paper to t' soles."

Then he began slowly filling his pipe from the new packet. For a few minutes he smoked in silence, then he remarked ;

" Sitha ! I'm thinkin' 'at a lass wi' sich bonny feet must have a varra bonny heart."

Thus spoke Jabe, the cobbler of Wath, voicing the opinion of most men throughout the ages.

XVIII

ROBIN-A-DALE AND THE LITTLE YELLOW ENGINE

ROBIN-A-DALE AND THE LITTLE YELLOW ENGINE

A FEW years ago, in quest of a Christmas present for Robin-a-Dale, aged two and a half, I entered the Pateley Emporium. It contains oilcloth, ladders, deck chairs, hoops, teapots, dolls, Teddy bears, picture-books, and scrubbing

brushes. I walked round and round the big store many times without finding the right gift.

I had almost decided to leave the quest for the day and bring Robin-a-Dale with me, so that the responsibility of the choice should be shifted on to his little angular shoulders, when, as I walked toward the doorway, my eye caught a glint of yellow behind folds of brown paper, nearly hidden by pails of all sizes.

"Nay! I don't think it will suit you; it's nobbut a lile yaller engine. You'll be seekin' summat better for your Robin-a-Dale"; but I was shown the engine. It was about twenty inches long, bright yellow, with scarlet wheels and funnel, and green stripes painted neatly round its body. For three shillings and sixpence this wooden engine was mine.

For a fortnight it lay wrapped in brown paper at the foot of the Christmas tree, rather sniffed at by Nanna; but then, nobody had ever hinted to her that it was a magic engine.

As soon as Robin-a-Dale set his periwinkle eyes on it he screamed with delight, and thenceforward it became the chiefest treasure in his Kingdom of Fun.

Other toys have reigned and departed, but the little yellow engine remains. The wheels go rather wobbly, and the funnel has lost its brightness.

. . . . .

This afternoon Robin-a-Dale, five and a quarter years old, smuggled it downstairs and was waiting very patiently

for me at the side door. Appearances had to be kept up before a new governess, and what would she think of a great lad of five playing with a toy that had belonged to a baby of two and a half! When one is five one plays with a Meccano and constructs dams and breakwaters, cranes and water-towers.

"Want to take the engine with you?" I asked.

He nodded "Yes."

"Where shall we go?"

The actual road taken is generally the same, but it can change into any road we wish, so he said politely:

"You choose."

"How about the Rocky Mountains?"

He agreed, and when we were well out of hearing of the once nursery, now schoolroom, window, he put the little engine down, dragging it along by a piece of much-worn string. It made an infernal noise. Down the front drive we went, very carefully, for the gradient is steep and the line much worn; then on to the turf leading to the Upper Lake, where we stopped to take in water; away past the Sun Hut, up the twisting path that runs alongside the Beck-that-talks.

At this point I was sent on ahead to clear the line, in case fallen timber should be barring the way, and at Big Trees Station we stopped, for a pine had his arm up, and the signal was against us. Warily through forests of golden bracken the little engine clattered, the driver on the look-out for grizzlies.

"Other people think they are rabbits, but they might be bears," said Robin-a-Dale.

At the hairpin bend the engine turned turtle, and cranes made of fallen pine branches had to be found before she was set on her wheels again. A squirrel cheeked us in saucy security from the cleft of a spruce, and a blackbird whistled advice. "But what's the use of advice if he never offers to help?" asked Robin-a-dale, as he set to, to reload the goods the engine had been carrying—two balls, one of red wool, the other of violet, and a skein of khaki thread used to establish telephonic communication between Winnipeg and Victoria.

. . . . .

After a perilous journey of three-quarters of an hour, we landed back safely at the side door, and a little warm hand was thrust into mine.

"Where shall we go to-morrow?"

"India?" I suggested.

"We've been there; don't you remember the badgers' homes were the Caves of Elephanta?"

"China?"

"We've been there. Yes, the big-wind day when we turned the tumble-down byre into the Great Wall of China."

"Siberia?"

"Why, we went to Siberia last week! Did you forget?"

"Egypt?"

" We've been there, 'cos we had to make pyramids of my bricks. Let's go somewhere quite new ! "

" Well," I said, at a loss, " you think of a place."

" I know ! "

" Where ? "

" Guess ! "

" No, you tell me instead."

" Well, I don't know its name, but the song says, ' A Happy Land, far—far—away ! ' Have you been there ? "

" Not yet," I replied.

" Do you think any one else has, or shall we and the little engine be the first ? "

" Oh, no ! Your father and many of his comrades found the way there from Flanders and France and Gallipoli."

" Did they ? " Then, after a pause : " They won't have a little yellow engine there ? "

" No."

" Oh ! won't they be pleased when they hear its rumble—rumble—rumble."

Then he opened the door for me, and lifted the engine in his arms over the doorstone. We tiptoed upstairs, for the schoolroom door was ajar, and smuggled the yellow engine back into the train-shed of a cupboard, close by the head of Robin-a-Dale's bed.

. . . . .

If any of you are puzzled about Christmas presents, let

me advise you to try to procure for three shillings and sixpence just such another little yellow engine, but be sure you get a magic one, for it is only a magic engine that will last long enough to take its owner on the Great Unknown Journey to the " Happy Land, far—far—away."

XIX

THE FARMER'S WIFE TO HER WHITE HEIFER

THE FARMER'S WIFE TO HER WHITE HEIFER

Coom, Cush-Luve, coom, thoo should be in thi byre
By t' edge o' dark,
Instead o' gettin' thisen mucked in mire.
Noo, just thoo mark

My words, Cush-Luve ! but thoo is varra knowin'
An' artful, too,
Thoo's up anent to' owd blackthorn by thi lowin',
Coom, Cush-Luve, noo !

Thoo'd kiss my neck, thoo bonny lile cratur ' ;
Give ower laikin',
But to be fond an' gamesome is thi nature . . .
Noo stars are wakin'

An' ivery beast, save thoo, in Dallow Ghyll
Is in its stall ;
Coom, Cush-Luve, get agate, wiv a good will
Git on an' all !

XX

MARYGOLD SWAYNE

MARYGOLD SWAYNE

MARYGOLD SWAYNE

THE sun went down and left the western sky the colour of a deep dog-rose. The fells above Langstrothdale Chase were as blue as the petals of a crane's-bill ; the house-walls of Hubberholme were a roseate grey, and every puddle in the narrow curling road was rosy too.

At a garden gate above Hubberholme a little girl stood watching the down-dale road. She was a bonny little creature, about five years of age. Her cheeks and her hands were the colour of the western sky, her eyes the colour of the high fells. One leg of her pink drawers hung below her faded lilac petticoat, and one little twisted blue sock wrinkled over a tiny clog. She wore an old blue scarf, tied shawl-wise round her shoulders, fastened in a knot at the middle of her back. The dress beneath it was a faded cotton print, evidently cut down from a grown-up's dress, and on her tangled brown hair a bonnet was set at a comical angle, half covering one beautiful black-lashed eye.

Let the people who will admire well-dressed, well-groomed infants. They may be admirable, but they have not one-tenth of the charm of a quaint little unkempt bairn, one who

has been washed and dressed at sun-up, fed at intervals, when the exigencies of housework, of milking, of butter-making, of egg-collecting allow; one that for the rest of the day must get along by itself as best it can, one to whom a bonnet's angle is far less important than the piece of sticky paper holding a squashy bit of butter-scotch.

The tiny lass at the garden gate gave me one look, then continued gazing down the road.

"Are you looking for any one?" I asked.

"Aye, fur Mister Brendon."

"Mister Brendon?"

"Aye, theer he is!"

Round a bend in the road came the old postman. Seeing the child, he waved his hand.

"Are you expecting a letter?" I asked.

"Nay, muther is. Ivery Saturday she gits a letter fra my faither."

"And who is your father?"

"Nay, I dunno; I'se niver set eyes on him, but he sends muther a letter nearly ivery Saturday, an' she's varra putten oot if yan doesn't coom."

"And what is your name?"

"Marygold Swayne."

"What a pretty name!"

"Dosta think so? Once I heerd granny tellin' muther it wur too much of a gentry name. Muther's name is Mary Belle Swayne, an' granny thinks Mary Belle's a gradely name fur folk like us."

At this stage in our conversation the old postman came up.

"Evenin', ma'am," said he. "Evenin', Marygold. I'm reet sorry theer's nowt fur thi muther this week, but tell her to cheer up as theer's sure to be a letter fur her next Saturday."

The baby's face puckered a trifle, and he added in a rough, kindly way, "But I'se not forgotten thee, Marygold. Nay, heer's thi stick o' barley sugar. Noo, doänt thoo iver think 'at owd Tom's forgitten thee!"

Marygold's face brightened at the barley sugar.

Just as Tom left the gate, a young girl came out of the cottage. She looked at me timidly, whilst Marygold toddled towards her calling out, "No letter, muther." She was a pretty girl, though she looked worn for her years. She had a sunset complexion like her child, and the same great believing black-lashed eyes.

"Good night," I said, and Marygold and her mother entered the cottage together.

. . . . .

Another day I met Marygold Swayne carrying home the milk in a brightly-painted jug.

"Hullo, Marygold," said I.

"Hullo," said she.

"Have you got your letter yet?"

"Aye, Mister Brendon brought it last Saturday, an' he said he'd be bringing no more."

"No more?" said I. "How's that?"

"Aye, he's what granny calls retiring, which means lookin' after his own hens instid o' other folks' letters; so a new postman 'ull be bringin' t' letters fur my muther."

"I suppose your father's at sea?"

"Nay, I dunno," replied Marygold, "but I did hear fra Martha Annie—she's in my class at school—'at my faither once worked in a quarry, an' 'at all quarry men wur wild—aye, she said they are a wild lot onyway, not like her faither who drives t' bus atween Kettlewell an' Grassington. She

says ony one 'at drives a bus mustn't be wild, 'cos folk wouldn't trust thersens to a wild driver. I'm reet sorry I'se got a wild faither, cos theer's times when my muther 'ud be better wiv a faither—at chapel an' at fairs an' sichlike, tho' granny says a man's no good hangin' aboot t' house all day long, allus under your feet."

Marygold's mother came out in search of the delayed milk.

"Good evenin'," she said to me; then, "Wheer's t' milk, Marygold?"

"My fault," I said. "I'm afraid I kept her chattering."

"Nay"—and she smiled—"she's a rare gossip is Marygold, same as her granny, Mary Alice, my mother."

"Aye! I doänt favour my faither at all," chirped in Marygold.

. . . . .

Some days later Marygold and I went blackberrying, "Gatherin' bummelkites," she called it; it was on a Saturday afternoon; I did all the gathering whilst Marygold discoursed and ate fifty per cent of the basket's contents. She was a gay sight on our return—her mouth bramble-stained, as were her hands, her pink cotton dress, and even her knees.

"You're a sad sight, Marygold," I said.

"Aye, I'se niver owt else, so Granny says," she replied.

"Well, I can't take you back looking such a sight; your mother will never trust us out again together." So I led her down to the waters of the Wharfe and did my best to

remove the outward signs of her greediness. After making her as clean as possible, we set off for her home.

She looked at the western sky ; it was half an hour after sundown.

" I'se late fur t' new postman," said she ; " it's first time t' new postman 'ull bring my muther her letter."

" Well, never mind being late, your mother can take the letter."

" Aye," agreed Marygold.

As we approached the garden, now russet and golden with early chrysanthemums, we saw Marygold's mother and the new postman in conversation.

The new postman was several decades younger than Tom Brendon, and he had only one arm. This greatly concerned Marygold ; she failed to understand how he could be as good a postman as Mr. Brendon, who had two arms.

As we came up, Marygold's mother gave the new postman a pleasant, shy smile, and turned into her doorway with her letter.

. . . . .

Then one day as I passed, Marygold's mother greeted me almost as cordially as her little lass did, and asked me to step in.

I sat down and greatly admired two white and red-spotted china cows on the mantelshelf.

" Some day I'd like to ask your advice," she said. " Marygold thinks a deal to you," she added as an excuse for her

seeming desire to be friendly. After this overture, I dropped in to see Marygold's mother and grandmother fairly often.

One afternoon, while Marygold and I were standing at the gate watching for the new postman, her mother said abruptly, forcing herself to speak :

" Dosta think it 'ud be reet fur me to think of gettin' wed ? Jim Wedmore, t' new postman, has asked me to walk out wiv him, an'—well, he isn't t' sort o' lad to keep a girl waitin' long : happen he'll ask me to wed him if I walk out wiv him."

" He seems a very likely man, Mrs. Swayne," I said.

She looked at me very steadily, then fixed her eyes on the ground and said in a low, jerky voice :

" I'm not Mrs. Swayne. I thowt you knew. I'm just Mary Belle Swayne—it's my muther 'at's Mrs. Swayne. Happen you won't want to come here now 'at you know. Happen you won't want to borrow Marygold noo you know she's nobbut a chance-bairn. . . Ah ! she might have been more, but when I found what was happening to me I went an' told t' man who'd gotten me wiv her, an', my God ! shall I iver forgit his face. He hummed an' he hawed for a bit ; then at lang last he said he cuddent wed me reet away as he'd just lost his job at t' quarry . . . 'at he didn't think he wur one o' t' marryin' sort, an' happen it wurn't true aboot my condition, an' then, worse than if he'd struck me, he asked how could he be certain 'at t' comin' bairn wur his ! Eh ! that wur a terrible thing to hear fra his lips ; so I let him go an' tried to think no more about him. Theer followed a hard time

fur muther an' me. Sin' my faither's death, twelve year sin', she had taken in lodgers; but when folk got to know o' t' trouble I wur in, in course they left off coomin', an' we had a hard time to make ends meet; but I did a bit o' sewin' an' we sold our eggs well, and muther got one day's charin' a week at t' big house, an' so we pulled thro' somehow an' Marygold wur born. Then muther went to see t' man, an' he wur difficult to find; an' when she found him he put her off wi' fair words, an' after a while he said he'd marry me, that is, when he found anuther job, an' then he left muther wivoot so much as sayin' good-bye. After a bit muther larned as how he had got a job at a quarry, Scarbro' way, an' hearin' no word fra him made her real mad wiv him, and she went an' told Mr. Croft, who lives up at t' big hoose, aboon Kettlewell, t' whole story. He wur a J.P. an' he ordered t' faither o' t' bairn to pay ten shillings a week towards t' keep of it, an', eh! dearie me," she sighed, "it's that ten shillings 'at cooms ivery Saturday 'at Marygold waits on at t' gate. Ah! but he wur bad to find and reet slippery he wur, an' when he came afore Mr. Croft, he told 'im as how he wur quite willin' to wed me, to make an honest woman o' me; but, God in Heaven! I knew 'at nowt on this earth would make an honest man o' him, an' I refused to have him. A man 'at would fail a girl in sich a pass would fail her again an' again, an' I told Mr. Croft I'd have nowt more to do wiv him. Vicar's sister came to see me an' told me I wur terrible mistooken, 'at fur sake o' t' bairn, Marygold, I ought to wed her faither; but after he went back on me I gave up thinkin' on him, an' I

told her it ud be a terrible sin to wed a man I could no longer luve. Then she said again I wur mistooken, but muther held by me an' said I wur reet—it 'ud be a terrible thing to wed a man 'at I'd allus look doon on."

"She *was* right, Mary Belle," I said. "My advice is this: before Jim Wedmore asks you to marry him, the first time you walk out with him tell him the whole truth. Give him a chance of not going on—that's only cricket; but if he asks you, after hearing the whole story, then take him and make him as happy as you can. Jim Wedmore's had a rough time, too; he lost an arm at Fricourt and has been out of work for three years tramping the big towns, spending hours at the Labour Exchanges seeking a job. I think he'll be glad to wed a real home-maker like you, Mary Belle, and a very bonny one, too. It's what he needs, as much as Marygold needs a father.

A month later a very tidy, very spruce Marygold gave me a call; she had brought a letter from her mother. I read:

"Jim Wedmore has asked me an' I've fixed Christmas Day. Would it be taking a liberty to send you an invite? Mother and I have not a main of friends, and it was Marygold's idea. She said as how church would seem less barelike if you was there." . . .

"Well, Marygold, do you know what's in this letter?"

"Aye, it's to tell ye 'at muther has found a new faither

fur me. Eh! I'm reet fain, an' Martha Annie an' other bairns 'ull be fair capped when they hear I've got a faither wiv ony one arm; but he says he can cuddle as good wiv one arm as maist faithers can wi' two!"

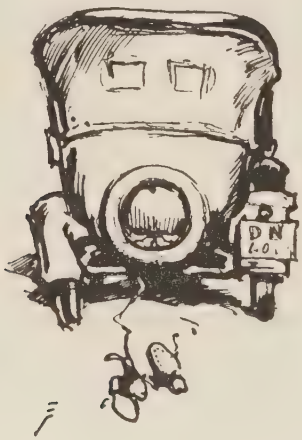
. . . . .

A year later, on my return to upper Wharfedale, a taller, slimmer Marygold met me.

"Hasta heard aboot my lile brother?"

"Marygold," I said, "you're a very lucky lass!"

"Aye, I am that," said lovely, contented Marygold, as she slipped her hand into mine.



XXI

TERENCE GREY

TERENCE GREY

TERENCE GREY'S mother was an Eskdale girl, and all her forbears on both sides had been little squires and yeoman farmers in Eskdale, Newton Dale, Glaisdale, and Wheeldale. She had the rare good fortune, even whilst at school, to be loved loyally by all the folk she smiled on, and because of her winsomeness, every one took it for granted that she would make a brilliant marriage. As the old school-cook, Eliza Buggins, said, " She wur sweet enow fur a duke," for in those days cooks still thought well of dukes; but one day this lovely girl ran away as far as Whitby, and there she married at the Registry Office a racketing, wandering, good-for-nothing Irishman, a ship's purser, handsome and reckless. She never

told us whether she was happy or disappointed, but we heard later that he had been submarined in the war, and that besides a son Terence, ten years old, she had three little daughters to bring up on almost nothing a year.

They lived together in a rambling grange—a good example of Yorkshire Tudor architecture, very exquisite to look at, but very uncomfortable to live in, given to Terence's mother by her aunt, who, when she remembered their existence, was generous to her niece and her niece's children.

Behind the house rose the Glaisdale moors, and from a high point on them Terence (at the picnic given in honour of his fourth birthday), looking eastward, saw a distant gleam of silver. He stretched out his tiny arms, letting his presents fall to the ground, and begged his mother for that, and only that.

"It is the sea, sweetheart."

"Then give me the sea," he said.

. . . . .

At school, before he was seven, he learned that the little shining river, the Esk, whereon he sailed his paper ships, led down to the North Sea; before his eighth birthday he had made his way along its banks by Beggar's Bridge and Egton Bridge down to Sleights and Ruswarp; he never explained how he managed the whole journey, but he saw Captain James Cook's statue, overlooking Whitby Harbour, and then he made straight for the West Pier, the nearest point to the

beautiful gleaming silver, which he found was full of hissing music of deep blue and green troughs and curling flounces of wet lace when he looked down on to it. Then he made his way to the sands, and there his mother found him with the spray on his face and neck, his hands and his bare legs ; by the sea he had found, along with some shells and seaweed and jelly fish, his quaint little soul, with its ebbs, its flows, its calms, and its storms.

Even his great-aunt expostulated, but in spite of all their expostulations, as often as he could he found his way down Eskdale to the sea. He would swim at dawn or at gloaming, at midday, at starlight. When he went to school in Whitby,

one bright young master discovered the best way to punish him was to deprive him of the sea.

"Now, Grey, no swimming for you for a day, or a week, or a fortnight," according to the gravity of the offence.

It was during his first term at school that Terence and I met. We made our better acquaintance investigating a slippery place on the shores north of Whitby. He was looking for a holy stone, a stone of alum shale pierced with a hole by the shell-fish, and he wanted it for an old farm wife who needed it as a cure for rheumatism. After getting as dirty as possible, we sat down for a rest, and Terence said, his eyes fixed on the little curling waves which were receding and taking with them a host of tiny shells and pebbles:

"When I grow up I shall sing about the sea, and the sea will always tell me what to sing. It's so full of songs—the songs go tumbling over each other, no time to finish one before the next song comes rolling in. Already the sea gives me much beautifuller, queerer thoughts than other people seem to have, and I want them to have my beautiful queer thoughts instead of their own. Some of their thoughts are like dust, gritty and dry, and heaps of mine are like foam, all salty and sparkling, and sometimes mine come so quickly they are like waves with the wind behind them, and sometimes a big seventh thought comes, and then it knocks me over, and that is a pity, isn't it, because then I forget all the other thoughts?'

. . . . .

His mother's idea for him was a place in her brother's engineering shop in Leeds. He refused, until I reminded him that the engines made in Leeds, Sheffield, Liverpool, Manchester, helped to build curving breakwaters and strong piers ; then he became reconciled to the studies preparatory to a course of engineering. In the thick of these studies at

sixteen he informed me, " I shall be a singer of the sea in my holidays ; there isn't much time during the term."

Anyway, he became the strongest swimmer for his years along the Yorkshire coast. It was a beautiful sight to watch him diving from a height into the wrinkled grey-blue North Sea, to watch his white arms and shoulders cleaving a swift

way through the iridescent water, his black hair damp about his forehead, his deep blue eyes half closed, his red lips parted.

Many a time when sailing back into Whitby Harbour, the lad has swum out to meet me, and one time when the sun was going down, dropping over Whitby a glamorous cloak of colour, and the wind was blowing very bitterly from the north and a fair sea running, I heaved to and pulled him in a quarter of a mile from the pier. His teeth chattered and he shivered a bit, and, disdaining an offer of a coat, he sat in the bows where the spray caught him and, looking into the cloudy sunset, he quoted :

> " The sun's rim dips, the stars rush out,
> At one stride comes the dark.

Isn't that wonderful ? *' At one stride comes the dark.'* Lord ! how I wish Coleridge had not found that line first ! "

. . . . .

Then one dawn (he was nearly eighteen) he swam out towards the sunrise, and some fishermen, seeing him in trouble, went to his aid. " Cramp," he called to them as he went down for the second time. They managed to reach him, but it was a small cobble, and they feared to upset it ;

anyway, in getting him in, and he was a big lad, nearly six feet, they let him hit his beautiful, unconscious head heavily against a rowlock, a fall which caused an ugly gash behind his ear from which he never wholly recovered.

Three weeks afterwards I saw him in hospital. "Sit down," he said, "and listen. A short while ago I wrote down some words in my 'Sea-Book,' and now I can hardly read them, and I can't make sense of them at all; yet I know they were sense when I wrote them. Will you write them out clearly for me? They are beautiful, queer thoughts like I used to tell you about, only somehow I can't make them out since my head was hurt."

When I went away I took the little "Sea-Book" from him and re-wrote the sentences; save for a word or two I could not decipher, I wrote them down as I found them; then I took the "Sea-Book" and the sheets of paper on which I had transcribed its contents back to Terence Grey, but he had quite forgotten that he had asked me to copy them out.

He read some of the contents slowly in an expressionless voice:

By the sea, many a hope is born, and many a dream dies: the sea witnesses epochs of the soul, that by man's count last no longer than it takes a star to drop from the zenith to the foam.

Cries of the gulls breaking the serenity of sundown! Cries of humanity breaking the serenity of Eternity.

Sea-dreams, Sea-hopes, why should they die? Are they not like the cirro-cumulus clouds constantly reshaped into other forms of glory!

Change? Change uses the pinions of Time.
Change is a brother of the great North Wind, a breath of Beauty that purifies and recreates.

What does the tiny creature living in a shell of fluted wonder understand of the kinship of the sea and the moon? What can the heart of man, living in its fluted wonder of physical matter understand of the kinship of Beauty and God? Maybe we hear echoes of this passionate kinship in the songs of the Greatest Singers, just as some shells still carry echoes of the sea.

It is only in the utter vast loneliness of the sea that we can sometimes glimpse Truth, especially the half-Truth that is ourselves.

Once at dawn, while the gulls and the fulmars were winging, I stood apart from myself and saw myself starkly

stripped of gallant pretence, naked as only God can see His creatures, and in that second, Time, Space, Height, Depth, Life, Death, Love were merged in an overwhelming Sorrow of Lack, and I was greatly stricken, until I heard the sea's message at my feet far, far below me.

' All is ephemeral save only Beauty. Good is the sunlight of Beauty, Evil but its shadow. Nothing else is, was, or shall ever be. Your deepest grief is but a tear in its heart, your highest joy but a smile on its lips, your greatest good but a note of its voice. You are nothing, you are all, you only exist as a hope in the soul of Beauty. You are but one of her waves, retreating to make way for another and another and another. Great lives have come and have gone. They are but as the seventh wave, larger than the others, of greater force, but if they ceased, the Sea of Beauty would still roll on. Energy, Light, and Loveliness for ever and for ever.'

Prayer is but a hope. If I could put one into words it would be, ' Let the waves of Beauty flow over me ; do not let me be arid sand where the tides never ebb or flow. Let the waves thunder over me, no matter if I am but swallowed up in the Great Ocean of Eternal Beauty.

" I am too tired to read more," he said, and put by the little " Sea-Book."

. . . . .

Terence got no better, and after a time was moved to a mental home. He gave a great deal of trouble, getting away and slipping down to the sea; but sooner or later they always found him by his singing. Later on they put him in a room overlooking the North Sea, and then he gave no trouble at all, save for reciting or singing at night some line or verse that caught his fancy.

"How is Terence to-day?" I would ask his attendant.

"Just about the same, ma'am, only for the last few nights he has kept on saying the same bit from something he's read. The lines go like this—we all know them now:

"'Row till you harbour in
All longings' port;
Row till you find all things
For which you sought.'" [1]

. . . . .

Then one night, whilst a concert was in progress for the other patients, Terence gave them all the slip.

The boat he had contrived to get hold of was found drifting empty, by a Middlesbrough ketch, half a dozen miles from land; an oar was missing, and Terence Grey was never seen

[1] From a poem by Sturge Moore.

again, neither was his body ever found, so, please God, he had his wish at last,

> *" Let the waves of Beauty flow over me ; do not let me be arid sand where the tides never ebb or flow. Let the waves thunder over me, no matter if I am but swallowed up in the Great Ocean of Eternal Beauty ! "*

XXII

THE BECK MEETINGS FAIRY

THE BECK MEETINGS FAIRY

Janet Metcalfe speaks :

I'LL tell you all aboot it, because you set great store on such things, but it fair caps me that I, Janet Metcalfe, should have seen a fairy. It doesn't, as you might say, run in our family seeing fairies, none on us being a seventh child

of a seventh child, or having second sight, or ever having had owt to do wi' ghosts an' sich-like outlandish things. My mother's cousin once said she saw Barguest, but every one knew her tales, and fra' dale-head to dale-end she was named "Truthful Ann."

I was expecting my lile grandson about tea-time; he had gone fishing aboon Beck Meetings, and day was drawing in. As everything was ready, I thought I would walk up t' footpath that skirts t' river to meet him.

As I came nigh t' owd bridge at Beck Meetings, I heard a sweet singing coming through t' alders. Noo, who could be singing theer at t' edge o' dark? I walked on to t' owd bridge so as to see t' watter better, for t' alder leaves are varra thick on t' banks. Aa! an' theer sittin' on a mossy stone, singing away like all that, splashing one white foot backards and forrards in t' watter, wur a mother-naked lass; not a stitch o' respectable clothing aboot her. Theer she sat wheer all t' village lads might have spied and made mock o' her.

"For shame to be sitting there!" I cried. "Coom out o' t' watter and get into your clothes, aye! an' put on your shoes an' stockings. If I knew who was your mother, I'd tell her to give you a sound whipping!"

She left off singing an' said, "*I don't need many clothes!*"

"She's daft," I thowt, but I asked, "Wheer do you belong?"

Afore answering, she mimicked t' song of a throstle.

"*To the Dale, of course!*"

"None of your fooling! Janet Metcalfe knows all t' respectable folk in this dale. Happen you're a gipsy."

She stood up, dreadfully unabashed. Aa! if t' Vicar could have seen her, and he so particular about good manners in lasses!

"*Nowt o' t' sort,*" she answered; "*gipsies don't stay long anywhere. I never leave the dale. I belong here.*"

"I won't argufy with you till you get some clothes on." I was gettin' riled by this time. "I'm not particular what you put on, but you must put on something if you want to talk to Janet Metcalfe."

She fetched a lile sigh and then a lile laugh.

"*Bizzum-head! Why are you so foolish? But I've always liked you, Janet.*"

"'Bizzum-head' to me, and 'Janet' indeed! Don't make so free with my name. Mrs. Metcalfe from you, if you please, young lass!" I said.

"*Young? Why, Janet, I'm aeons older than you!*"

Just then she whistled again, and two lapwings flew down, bringing atween them a thin blue mist. Aa! but I was capped when that white lass swung it round her like t' Queen o' Sheba might a fine shawl.

"*Now I'm coming up to you, Janet.*"

She seemed to glide ower t' parapit o' t' bridge, and then she came alongside me an' leant ower. Aa! she wur a cool one! I did not understand t' way o' her, so I waited for her to speak.

"*It's a pleasant dale, Janet.*"

" It is, miss." (I said " miss," for she was growin' varra stately in her shawl of mist, with its fringes o' rain, an' she seemed to be growing up with every minute.)

Then she said, as proud as a princess, " *I don't suppose you would have seen* me *if you had not been so fond of the dale, Janet.*"

I wur fair flummoxed, for when I first clapped eyes on her she seemed a lile lass aboot twelve years old ; an' noo she was twice as old, an' getting older every moment. Not knowing who she might be, I did not want to offend her, especially as I had begun by calling [1] on her.

" Are you one of *them*, mam ? " I said.

She laughed, then suddenly grew serious, and turned and waved her hand to a star ower Great Whernside way.

" *That's the one I'm always looking for at this time of the year. It's very fond of me because I lend it my river for a mirror, and when it's tired I let it sit on the knees of my hills.*"

" Surely she's daft," I said to mysen.

Her river indeed ! (for that part of the river was Squire Challoner's). *Her* hills ! (for where she gazed belonged to t' shooting syndicate).

Then she pulled her shawl ower her head, and in a soft, windy voice said, " *Good-bye, Janet,*" and passed oot o' sight as wick as a leveret.

Aa ! fancy noo, my seein' a fairy ! Had I read in t' newspapers a bit aboot folk seeing fairies at Keighley ? Aye, noo I coom to think on it, I did see summat about t' lasses

[1] *Calling* = scolding.

in a Keighley wood seeing t' fairies dancing in a ring ; an' then I dozed a while afore walkin' oot to meet my lile grandson. Yon Beck Meetings fairy, though she warn't exactly respectful, she warn't oncivil, mind you—but it's best not to mell with fairies an' sich-like !

XXIII

THE TINKER'S WIDOW

THE TINKER'S WIDOW

" The happiest hours that ever I spent ?

They were up where heath and hummocks of bent,
Where whin and whortle, and blae and bramble
All grow wild in the bonniest scramble
Up above World's End : roads are that hilly
You've got to go slowly, willy or nilly. . . .

" I used to teach in a village school
Before I took Jim,
A village in Yoredale. Folk thought me a fool
But then, Lord bless you ! they didn't know him.
After the war—he was wounded twice—
He couldn't return to a desk and a stool
At any price,

So he bought a tinker's strong-built cart
And a piebald mare. (He had a soft heart !)
He had seen her abused by a circus lad,
So he offered for her, it made him real mad
To see her ill-treated. . . . Afterwards, she
Had good years with us—years happy and free.
She'd the knowingest way of telling the time,
Was willing as well. In the years of her prime
She travelled many a dusty long mile
From the grey North Sea to bonny Carlisle.

" The police never worry
Tho' they're not slack,
Yet they don't hurry
To beat a rough track,
But whenever we camped anywhere in a dale
They made us move on—they would without fail,
But roads on top
They were our own,
So at dusk we'd stop
And rest till dawn :
What wonderful sights
We have shared, what hard fights
When the wind banged and beat us
And sought to unseat us,
To upset our cart ; once at Noraby Edge
It was overturned on a rough limestone ledge.

" We both of us loved the light of the sun
—It is full of sweet fun—
And the light of the stars made us pray,
But Jim always said that the loveliest light
Was from a veiled moon on a midsummer night
When the fells are a satiny grey.

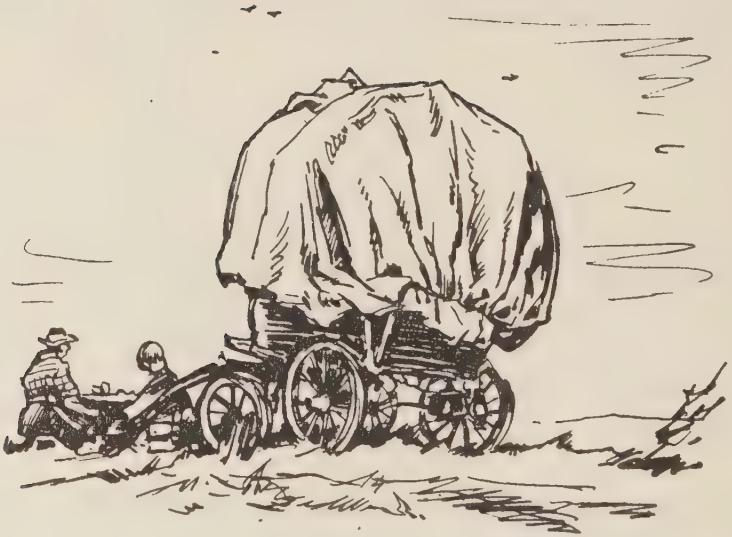
How his square shoulders would block out the fells,
His steady heart-beat drown the surge in the ghylls
Of wind among larches, among alder switches
While hawthorns brushed past us like dark broom-sticked
witches !

. . . . .

" But after Jim left me, how could I bear
To be at World's End, a wild moorland where
One needs a comrade ! for you must share
Such things ; alone they make you despair.

" Yet there are times when the stars gleam brightly,
The dead years troop back, oh ! so lightly,
Then I forget that the winds are colder,
And I'm again where the arms of the pines
Rock dream-bairns, and far moor-lines

Are once more hidden by Jim's great shoulder,
Massive as some strong mountain boulder. . . .
Oh ! Days when Life was a brave rigadoon,
Danced to a lost, wild, lovely tune
That finished, dear Lord ! too soon . . . too soon !



XXVI

DOCTOR FELL

DOCTOR FELL

"NOW, theer's a man I cannot abide; did you ever hear tell as how he has t' evil eye!"

It was old Mrs. Verity of Mill House, near Hob's Ghyll, who spoke.

"The evil eye? Surely no dalesman or woman to-day really believes in the evil eye! You don't really believe Doctor Fell has the evil eye, Mrs. Verity?"

"I do an' all, an' theer's many other folk in Garside that believes it too."

Doctor Fell, in a high, old-fashioned gig, drove past us down the steep hill that leads to the village. Some folk said he was past seventy, but he was still erect, strong, and well set up. His black hair showed a few streaks of grey, but

his eyebrows were jetty and overhung small, pewter-coloured eyes. He had a narrow forehead and a heavy chin, and, in repose, his face was certainly grim, but his smile disarmed criticism and his manners were courtly.

"But you know, Mrs. Verity," I expostulated, "the Doctor is a friend of mine."

"Aye, an' that makes us fearful for you; but so far you've niver crossed him."

"I can't imagine how you can think that so agreeable a man has the evil eye!"

"Theer's no imaginings about it. Nearly every one in Teesdale knows it; he's clever enough as a doctor if you haven't crossed him; but cross him, an' next time he looks at you summat evil 'ull happen to you or yourn soon after. I'm a widder woman, an' you've been a good friend to me, an' I can't abide to think of owt evil happening to you. I'd feel awful queer like if I knew yon doctor were looking after you if you were badly."

"Do you want me to call in the new doctor?" I asked laughingly.

"Nay, nay, you couldn't cross him worse than by calling in t' new doctor. Nay, have no doctor—ask for t' lile nurse body. I mind how Jem Stobbart called in t' new doctor to see his mother when she had backache, and when t' poor owd woman got about again she met yon Doctor Fell, an' he takes off his hat an' gives her his nice smile.

"'An' who's been looking after you, Mrs. Stobbart?' he asks, an', poor woman, she couldn't look at him, he were

staring at her so strangely; but two weeks sin' she lost t' sight o' both eyes, an' she begged and prayed Jem to cross him no more.

"Aye! an' dosta mind Lizzie Riddel? She wouldn't have him for her childer-birth, and after t' bairn were born—as bonny a bairn as you might see in a year o' Sundays—she says, 'Nurse, I never want Doctor Fell to clap eyes on my babby. I maun keep her oot o' his path,' an' Nurse shivered like an' said, 'Theer, theer, try an' sleep a bit.' Well, Lizzie kept her bairn oot of t' doctor's path, but one day, it were t' day her man were let oot o' t' Army, she wheeled t' pramulator doon to t' station to meet t' train, eh! an' that poor girl were nigh scared out o' her wits when she saw Doctor Fell a-coomin' doon t' street. She tried to go t' other way, but it warn't no use. Up he came, his hat in his hand, an' smiled his nice smile.

"'Oh! ho!' he says, 'yon's a fine, bonny bairn, Lizzie. An' who brought that bonny bairn into t' world?'

"Then he looked bairn all over, an' Lizzie fair trembled.

"Believe me, or believe me not, that bairn died o' croup within a fortneet!

"Aye! he allus says ony folk 'at crosses him cooms by ill-luck, an' it's true an' all. If he looked at me wiv his evil eyes, I should set my house in order, make my will, and have all ready for a gradely end."

"But, seriously, Mrs. Verity, you don't believe that any one has such a power?"

"I've niver known ony other folk wi' t' evil eye, but my

gaffer told me about a witch woman named Maggie Moles who lived in anuther dale. Fra' his telling, she worked a vast o' evil afore she wur found droonded in t' river. An' yon Doctor, he won't die in his bed.

" Well, I must be making for off : I see t' train's signalled. I'm meeting my daughter ; she'd been to Richmond to ask Doctor Walker about her ear : she's hard o' hearing in one ear, but she won't let Doctor Fell know about it, then for sure she'd be hard o' hearing in both ears ! Nay ! he doesn't step ower our doorstep.

" Good-bye, luve, an' tak' care on yoursen, dashin' about in your lile motor-car, an' if you have a smash an' all, may t' good Lord grant 'at it happens so far fra' Garside that you can call in anuther doctor to mend you ! "

XXV

THE GYPSY BRIDE

ROUND A BRUSHWOOD FIRE

THE GYPSY BRIDE

AN ANCESTRESS

FORGET that iver I ran barefoot
An' danced round a brushwood fire,
An' thro' our caravan window watched
Stars climb a poplar spire ?

Forget my granny who sits on t' steps
Smokin' her owd clay pipe ?
How highways and years twist thro' her mind
As she harks t' wailin' o' t' snipe !

Forget my dad ? Theer's niver a man
In North or South Countree
A straighter rider ! Who can break in
A wild colt better nor he ?

Forget my sister Roma, whose eyes
Are violets seen thro' veils
O' mist—forget her voice, and her way
O' tellin' owd sorrowful tales ?

Forget t' round hill wheer my mother sleeps,
  Wheer a tide o' wild flowers rise ?
I'd as lief forget it's God Who leets
  Up mornin' an' evenin' skies.

Thoo has gi'en me wonnerful clothes an' gems,
  But as I sit in thi hall,
I'se terrible fain to be wheer winds
  Whistle thro' hedge an' wall.

Can thoo call hounds off when t' scent's breast high,
  Or learn a linnet to trill,
Or forbid a Romany heart to roam
  At t' whisper o' lile April ?

XXVI

HANNAH MOORHOUSE

HANNAH MOORHOUSE

HANNAH had nursed my father, slapped, spoiled, and adored him since he was born, and when he wedded a South Country girl, for love of him she left her own country and her own folk to live among strangers. Maggie knew she was going into a tiny household where everything would be done on a very small scale, but she thoroughly approved of my father leaving his father and seeking his fortune in the " Middle Temple "—" Though," she said, " it had an onchristian heathen sound aboot it."

When I was born, she transferred her devotion for my father to me ; she refused to use the newfangled cradle, and secured from somewhere an old-fashioned wooden rocking one, which she placed on the kitchen hearth, on

the right-hand side of the range, which " wur a fair disgrace to ony decent woman to have to use " ; but then, the less said about that box of a South-Country kitchen the better. Hannah's scorn of it, with its parlour window, its parlour floor and parlour furniture, was superb. She longed for the stone-flagged kitchen of my grandfather's house—the hospitable range, the oaken plate racks, the roomy shelves—" A kitchen where a pack o' foxhounds could lie down an' rest in, aye ! a kitchen, not a lile blue painted parlour wheer even a kitten cuddent turn round without hittin' summat in t' way of a chair leg."

The next battle with Maggie came over my clothes—" cobwebs " she called them, and secured from somewhere a big plaid shawl, and she resolutely refused to wheel me out in the elegant pram. She said, " Her arms wur better nor a white-painted pram, and she wurn't goin' to carry a bairn aboot i' sike gaumless claethes."

But the chiefest battle of all was about Hannah's holiday. She really needed one, but she hated leaving " t' bairn wi'out a sensible body to tak' care on her." After weeks of persuasion my father and mother inveigled her into taking a fortnight off. She packed up during the week and was very moody and sulky, until both my father and mother were right glad that she was going away for a while. When the great day came neither of them saw Hannah or her box leave the house. She left at cock-light, silently as the last star, and when my mother went to the old wooden cradle to dress me she found, to her great distress, that the cradle was

empty! Old Hannah had taken me on her holiday and had left a letter on the tiny pillow:

"DEAR MASTER GEORGE,

"I am taking a holiday to pleese you baith; it would be no holiday for Me worriting over what was happening to Bairn, so i have takken her with Me.

"Youre obediant servent

"HANNAH MOORHOUSE"

My mother sent a frantic telegram of expostulation, and was in despair over this insulting kidnapping of her baby.

When Hannah returned with me in the old plaid shawl she found another maid installed to "help her wi' t' hard work."

"Hard work! in this lile box; theer isn't no work in a place like this! Bread bought! cakes bought! jam bought! washin' sent out! no lamps to clean!"

She declared war to the death on the new maid! She bided her for nine months, then could stand her and her South-Country ways no longer. The new maid, a bright little Cockney, laughed at Hannah's strong boots, her faded bonnet, her virile speech, and, worst of all, at her store of North-Country ballads and proverbs and stories.

So one day Hannah packed up very quietly and went away again at cock-light, leaving a second note for my father. She pinned it over the space in a china cabinet where my

mother kept her only extravagance—a small, highly-prized miniature of me.

"DEAR MASTER GEORGE,

"i cant bide strangeness of this place any longer, it fair brakes my Heart; i cant take Bairn and rear her in a sensible country, so i have takken her minitoor instead. Yon menseless giggling servent lass is walking oot with three lads, and she weant decide which on 'em to choose and she lends Bairn to them in turn to hold whenever you an' Mistress is out. They have all offered to gie her one as bonnie if she'll nobbut name Day. This is no place for me or for Bairn.

"Your obediant servent

"HANNAH MOORHOUSE"

XXVII

MRS. JANE AND THE LADDER OF VIRTUE

MRS. JANE AND THE LADDER OF VIRTUE

MY grandfather's house stood above a small, lonely tarn. In winter it looked very grim; spring came to it tardily; summer threw a coquettish laugh and slipped away with the first southing swallow; autumn, after a plucky golden fight with the wind, abdicated in favour of sombre winter.

Winter ruled inside the house as well. Just as the summer's stay was brief, so, too, my grandmother's sunny smile was seen but a short while before she left for ever to walk in sunnier valleys, and Mrs. Jane, a wintry housekeeper, reigned in her stead.

My visits to the great lorn house were the bane of her dull life. Bon't! Why should my grandfather have the calamitous luck to have as a granddaughter an impious, noisy slip of a bairn who would never be a credit to such a God-fearing and handsome old gentleman!

For my sins, which were frequent and various, she punished me according to her lights. After a while she realized that a chapter of Daniel learned by heart in the cold loft made me come forth like a roaring lioness-cub seeking whom I might aggravate. She tried reading tracts aloud to me, just

before bedtime, telling of the sudden and often most painful deaths of iniquitous children. These tracts made me ponder over the nursery accommodation in hell—Mrs. Jane spoke of hell as familiarly as other people spoke of the tarn outside the house. I wondered whether a doll would be admitted with its owner, or have to be secretly left in a corner of the porch as it had when we attended morning service at St. Chad's.

One day—the day I had invited ten piglets for a scamper in the flower gardens—owing to my grandfather having some congenial spirits to dinner and whist, Mrs. Jane had no time to give to a well-thought-out punishment, so she locked me in the loft until she had time for me. Even Tibbie, who had been grandmother's maid and loved me because of my fancied resemblance to her, refused to plead for me on this occasion, so into the loft I went.

My grandfather dined in the middle of the day, and the afternoon was long and fortunately sunny; a birch branch swayed fitfully before the tiny, high window, and a friendly bullfinch cocked an eye at me and came several times in answer to my whistle.

The loft was stacked with books—books of all colours, of all sizes, some in old leathern bindings, others with half-torn paper backs, books on every known subject—all rejected for some reason or other from an honourable place in the gloomy, cavernous library. I sat among them, an islet in a vast sea of information. I began exploring: my quest was a picture-book, and after ten minutes' search I found a treasure, a

queer, old, leather-bound octavo with a curious clasp. It was not written in English, and I do not remember whether it was in French or Latin—it wasn't Greek or Arabic or Erse —because I could make out the letters, though the meaning of the words was beyond me. It was a collection of old, very crude woodcuts, and one picture succeeded where Daniel and the tracts had failed, and indelibly printed on my mind the dizzy abysses that divide virtue and vice.

It represented a mystical ladder whose base was on the earth and whose summit was lost in the heavens. At the earthly base there were two churches and a dragon. The dragon's mouth was quite as large as the tower of one of the churches. Some knights on horses were passing the dragon, the horses very pious-looking, the knights presumably pious-looking too, but wearing face-plates. On different rungs of the ladder were priests and laymen, all ready to topple off, whilst on their right Laziness called to them to rest, and on the left Luxury beckoned them pleasantly.

Almost at the top of the ladder was a nun, balancing herself very creditably considering her voluminous clothes, one hand holding on to the ladder, the other reaching for a heavenly crown which floated on some puffy clouds. Protecting her were two languid angels, one with a toy sword, the other with a shield. They were guarding her from two darling little imps, who were flying through the air with bows and arrows. The topmost imp had ears like a fox-terrier and a wee tuft of a rabbit tail, and both imps looked as if they understood archery. They were grinning merrily, and were

evidently hugely enjoying themselves. They were a great attraction !

. . . . .

Next time a tract threatened I told Mrs. Jane a story I had invented with the aid of the picture. It was far more gruesome than the gruesomest of her tracts, and she shuddered when I came to the description of the imps. Whenever I needed a new story for her I hid in the loft and sought fresh inspiration from the Ladder of Virtue ; and whilst Mrs. Jane knitted, I recounted to her incidents from the life-histories of those topplers off the ladder.

By contrast, the tracts were so mild and dull that she gave them up, so for that reason I have always a pleasant remembrance for the queer old woodcut of the Ladder of Virtue.

XXVIII

GRANDMOTHER ELIZABETH

GRANDMOTHER ELIZABETH

TIBBIE MARSHALL—now a great-grandmother herself—told me about my Grandmother Elizabeth. Grandfather spoke of her only twice to me ; the first time was when I rebelled at going to Matins one Sunday morning. I rebelled because I had been sent the previous Friday afternoon to a picnic of the Sunday School children, at which the Vicar had taken great advantage of all present by offering up a long and tedious thanksgiving after tea. My grandfather looked steadily at Tibbie, then at Mrs. Jane, his housekeeper, and said :

" I hope in one respect she does not take after her grandmother ; an excellent wife and mother to be sure, but of a most irreverent disposition."

Tibbie had been my grandmother's maid, and she answered him with some spirit.

" Nay, t' mistress wur reverent enow, but it wurn't same kind o' reverence as thine ! "

Mrs. Jane sighed smugly and said, " At ony rate, we'll all do our duty by her grandchild."

The second and last time my grandfather spoke of her was two years later. Every year, as his eldest grandchild,

it was my duty to visit him in his North-Country home, and these visits were always a mixture of things pleasant and unpleasant ; the warm fragrance of his cattle, the adorable squashiness of his ducklings, the thrill on the way to bed of passing the suit of armour, and the sweet chimes of the grandfather clock—all these were mixed up with the drone of the Vicar's voice, the hardness of the pew-seats, and the battles with Tibbie over the entanglement of my hair.

One morning I was in Polworth's carpentering shop trying to pursuade him to make me some nesting boxes. When he was almost persuaded, my grandfather came in and asked him about a window for a byre. As we left the shop Polworth called after me :

" Thoo mun have thi bird boxes, but to ma mind birds wi' ony gumption can build their own nests."

Then my grandfather looked at me and said :

" How like your grandmother ! She had a passion for birds, and because of it we couldn't keep a currant or a gooseberry from them. She used to say that she preferred the birds to the fruit : a childish remark, but in some ways she was always a child ! "

That night, after one of the fiercest of hair battles, at which I almost wept, I asked Tibbie what my grandmother looked like.

" Thi grandmother wur lile, wi' quick-movin' ways like a bird ; her hair wur black as a crow's back."

" And her eyes, Tibbie ? "

" Her eyes—well, I'm no certain of her eyes, but sometimes her eyes wur inky blue an' sometimes they wur grey as t' clouds wur this mornin', an' by lamplight, when she wur readin' to thi father aboot t' carryings on o' Adam Bell, Clym o' the Clough, an' William o' Cloudeslie—then her eyes looked black as pitch."

" And her mouth, Tibbie " ?

" Her mouth wur summat like thine, an' her face wur thin an' a bit hollow-like, an' artist folk said she had a lovely chin, ' modelled,' they called it. She wurn't exactly pale, but nivver had a rosy colour."

" Did she love grandfather, Tibbie ? "

" She must have done, for she ran awa' wiv him when she wur nineteen ; but to my mind she made a kind o' picture. And after her childer wur born she sort o' found out 'at t' picture of him wurn't a real likeness, an' then she used to look

at him sometimes wi' a strange lovin' look, an' after he'd been talkin', she'd laugh a little, an' never nay-say him, but all t' same she'd go her ain gate."

"And she had a passion for birds, Tibbie?"

"She had an' all, an' many a time I've followed her wiv a cloak in t' winter when she wur feedin' them. She had lile tables made fur 'em, so that t' spaniels cuddent take t' food 'at she spread oot, an' t' winter when she wur dying, birds flew in an' oot her window like in a woodland, an' t' robins used to sit on her hand an' peck t' bread fra atween her lovely lips; it fair made a body weep to hear her calling t' birds by t' love-names 'at she should have had for her man; but he hadn't much use for sich things, an' when he coom into her room, out o' her lovin' kindness she'd put t' Bible on t' bed. All those weariful days I nivver heerd her put oot save once."

"Tell me about it, Tibbie."

"Whya, luve, thou mustn't let thi grandfather know I told thee. It wur this way: thi grandmother cuddent bide priests—neither bishops, vicars, curates, or owt, and that was real out-putting for thi grandfather (he wur parson's warden for forty years). Well, thi grandmother she wud nivver see t' parsons if they called, an' save fur t' christenings o' thi father an' his brothers an' sisters she wuddent attend church —which, luve, wur varra wrong o' her—but happen less wrong fur her than fur other folk, because she wur so good an' kind she needed less o' religion than maist folk do. Well, as I wur tellin' thee, she lay in bed all t' hard winter o' eighteen

eighty-seven, happy wi' her birds an' thi father's letters ; thi father wur beginning to get on an' wur courtin' a South-Country lass—her folk came fra Sussex Doons, I've heerd tell—an' thi grandmother wur reet fain to hear all aboot her an' anxious-like 'at she should be good enow an' pretty enow fur her lad. Nigh on Christmas she knew she wuddent live much longer, so she bade us send a telegram to thi father to coom to say good-bye ; an' she lay waitin' an' waitin' an' waitin' on him, hour after hour. She knew he wur comin', aye ! but t' hours wur terrible long, an' birds came in an' oot an' only her eyes greeted them. Then at t' edge o' dusk thi grandfather came in wiv his friend t' Vicar, to bring her words o' consolation an' some knowledge o' t' way to God. Eh ! dearie me, doy, she sat herself slowly up in bed, her eyes coal-black, her lile hands quivering, an' she pointed to t' door :

" ' Go ! All my life God has been my Friend : I need no priest to come between us. Consolation ! I've no need of consolation, and I can find my own way to a Friend's house.'

" Thi grandfather and t' Vicar sidled out o' t' door, an' when they had gone she gave a lile moan.

" ' I'm quite ready to go, Tibbie, but I would say good-bye to my boy. My good Tibbie, why doesn't he come ? '

" And why didn't he come, Tibbie ? "

" Because there wur a girt snow-storm, an' trains wur held up an' t' roads blocked an' telegraph wires down ; but she knew fur sartin wi'oot ony letters or telegrams 'at he wur on his way to say ' good-bye,' an' he came a few hours afterwards. Poor lad ! he started out t' moment he got t' telegram

an' towards dawn he tramped home through mony a drift. How t' dogs barked wi' joy to see him again! His eyes glowed like hers when he heard he wur too late—and he went upstairs alone.

"Afterwards, he put up a grand reredos in St. Chad's to her memory, but that wurn't to please himself but to please thi grandfather. Thi grandmother didn't hold wi' gravestones. She asked for lile willow trees instead. Eh! she wur reet fond o' trees, an' thi grandfather wur varra put-out aboot having no headstone, but thi father wuddent have no headstone—an' t' willows are girt trees now."

XXIX

GREAT-AUNT ELLEN

GREAT-AUNT ELLEN

ONE January, whilst I was staying with my grandfather, his sister, great-aunt Ellen, came to visit him. Before her arrival the silent old house became the scene of much cleaning; there was a cheerful bustling among the servants, the sheets were taken off the drawing-room mirrors and chairs, the windows of the best bedroom were opened, and a fire kept going in it for several days; also Mrs. Jane engaged an extra maid, "Because now we should be having

tea-parties and the like, and there would be a lot of company coming and going."

The day of her arrival came, and old Bob went to meet her with the sleigh, for the snow had fallen so thickly during the night that the old carriage would have sunk to its wheel-tops in the drifts. Towards gloaming great-aunt Ellen arrived.

I peeped between the banisters and saw my grandfather walk forward and greet a tall, slender old lady. He and Mrs. Jane helped her to emerge from a multiplicity of coats and wraps. I noticed her steady, grey-blue eyes, her aquiline nose, her mouth and oval chin outlined against the dark oak panelling.

At bedtime I overheard some of Mrs. Jane's remarks to Betsy, the housemaid, and learned that great-aunt Ellen had been considered a rare beauty in her young womanhood, and had been married three times, which by Betsy's admiring, "Aa! thoo dostna say soä!" was proof positive of great-aunt Ellen's attractiveness.

After great-aunt Ellen came it snowed every day, and by her orders I was kept in. "The child will have no complexion if she goes out in all weathers like a boy!" and I knew intuitively that it was no use arguing with her.

For a week the snow-drifts were so deep that the mail-cart could not get up-dale, so Mrs. Jane's new knitting patterns failed to arrive, and also Betsy's weekly magazine of romantic stories. Mrs. Jane took her loss very philosophically, and continued to knit old patterns, but Betsy was

greatly perturbed at the non-arrival of her magazine, so one afternoon when the lamps had to be lit extra early I took my pencils and paper to the drawing-room fireside and began writing a romance for Betsy, which I intended to read to her at bedtime. From fragments of the stories which she had read to me sitting at the foot of my bed I knew that the hero was always tall and strong with flashing eyes ; generally he was in the Life Guards and was of ultra-noble birth. As Betsy considered Noel Alexander a noble name, I named the hero Noel Alexander. I also knew that the villain (I wasn't sure what a villain was then, and am very doubtful if I know what he is now) had a deep, crafty voice and a foreign dark look ; that the heroine, whose hair was like spun gold, supported a dear old mother, old enough and helpless enough to have been a great-great-grandmother.

All went merrily with my story—there had been an exciting fox-chase and a shipwreck—when I suddenly remembered that all Betsy's stories ended with passionate proposals, a line of asterisks

* * * * * * * *

which I managed easily enough, and then a final paragraph about bridesmaids' dresses and the melodious clanging of wedding bells. The bells gave no trouble, but the proposal was quite another matter. I had heard all kinds of bells ever since I was born ; but, even with the greatest optimism.

I could not hope to receive a proposal for at least nine years, by which time I should be able to say the twelve or even the thirteen times table without a mistake, and be able to add up the housekeeping accounts.

Just as my lack of experience in the matter of proposals threatened to spoil the finale of my story, great-aunt Ellen came into the room, and, taking an easy chair by the fire, began her embroidery.

"Don't frown, dear! What are you writing?"

"It's a story for Betsy, because the postman hasn't brought her story, and I've come to where Noel Alexander ought to propose to the beautiful Emmeline—he's just saved her from a watery grave—but I've never written a proposal before, and how can you write about something you don't know?"

"Pity more authors do not realize that, dear!"

"And I can't leave it out because Betsy says it's always the best part of a story."

Great-aunt Ellen was smiling and looking into the log fire. Seeing her face softened by the log-light (she was the most beautiful old woman—and I have been fortunate in this respect—that I have ever seen), I remembered how she had been married three times and ought to know something about proposals. Here, by the fireside, was the most helpful person imaginable to an inspirationless author.

"Great-aunt Ellen, would you mind telling me how great-uncle John—he was the first, wasn't he?—how he proposed?"

Great-aunt Ellen looked at me and smiled.

"Do you want a proposal for Betsy's story, or do you *really* want to know how great-uncle John proposed?"

"Oh, please, how he really proposed!"

. . . . .

"A long time ago, in the house where the Gilberts now live, there lived a Mrs. Middleton with her son John. When I was a little girl I thought that they were very poor, because John had no pony to ride and Mrs. Middleton had only one good-natured little maidservant to help with all the housework. We saw him occasionally, but he was a shy lad. When he went to school I knew how lonely his mother would be, so sometimes I called and had tea with her when my lessons were over, and I played to her my new piano pieces, and she would read me John's letters from school, and I remembered how joyful she was when she learned that he had won a scholarship for Oxford.

"When John came home he seemed very quiet, and I felt a little annoyed with him because he tried to keep out of my way. Once I thought how spiritless he looked at a meet of the Windale Foxhounds, which was held in the paddock here, when most of his contemporaries were in the saddle laughing and chatting together.

"Next time he came back from the south he had a Readership, and was even taller and slighter than before. I think he had strained his eyes with his work, because he had to wear spectacles for reading."

Great-aunt Ellen paused and looked into the fire.

" And, great-aunt Ellen, what were his eyes like ? "

" He had deep-set eyes, very gentle, except when he was roused in argument ; then they became almost fanatically earnest. One wintry day—the day after my birthday and the Hunt Ball—I went to see his mother and to scold him for not accepting my invitation. Mrs. Middleton rose to greet me, but John, although he knew that I had entered the room, continued kneeling and making up the fire. Mrs. Middleton asked gaily about the ball, the dresses, and my partners.

" ' Is it true that Squire Patterson proposed ? '

" John Middleton glanced quickly at me for a moment, then continued to build up the fire.

" I thought that he might have made some apology for not coming to my birthday ball, so I laughed and hoped to annoy him by not answering Mrs. Middleton's playful question.

" ' And Harry Conyers ; I suppose he looked very handsome in his pink coat. I'm told he wore the same '—she lowered her voice with gentle mockery—' yes, the very same silk stockings and pumps that he wore at the Levee. Well ! there are many people who think you might do worse than become the Master's missus, Ellen, dear ! '

" John looked at his mother and frowned. I turned to her and said :

" ' Yes, Mr. Conyers asked me to accept a joint mastership for life, but do you think Henry Conyers would give up one day's hunting for me ? He'd love his hounds first, his wife second.'

"'I expect it will be Harry,' Mrs. Middleton said.

"Then John got up and came and sat down on a needle-worked stool at my feet; his mother and I went on discussing the Hunt Ball, and after a little while he sighed wearily and leaned his head against my knee. I was surprised and very pleased, because he so rarely showed that he cared to be near me. Impulsively I stooped and kissed his forehead; for a minute he did not stir, then he turned and put his long, slender arms around me."

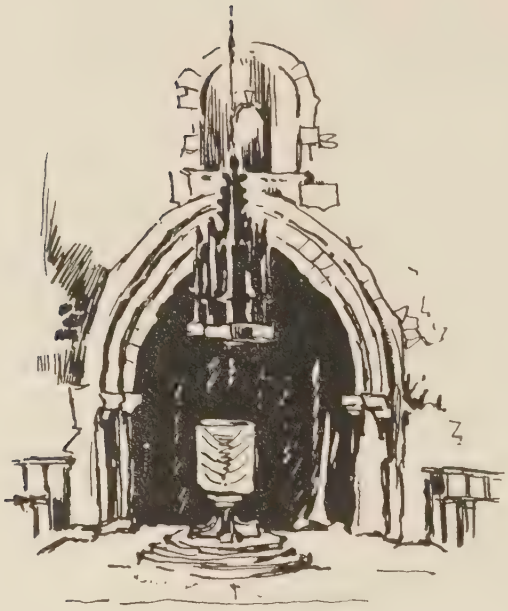
"Oh! but, great-aunt Ellen, that was the moment when Betsy's hero would have said, 'Won't thou be mine?'"

"No," said great-aunt Ellen, "he never said that; but though he did not, his mother and I knew what was in his heart. After a while she and I rose and left him dreaming by the fire.

"Next morning, immediately after breakfast, John came here and asked your great-grandfather for my hand in marriage. For two hours he faced the anger of all my family, and refused to take '*No*' for an answer—but . . . John never proposed to me, dear!"

XXX

A DALE CHRISTENING



A DALE CHRISTENING TOAST

(For Charles Tony)

To thi mind—Peace,
To thi heart—Joy,
To thi soul—Strength
And Courage, Doy ; [1]
In thine outgoings
Nowt amiss,
To thi home-comings
Happiness.

[1]Doy dim. for Darling.

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